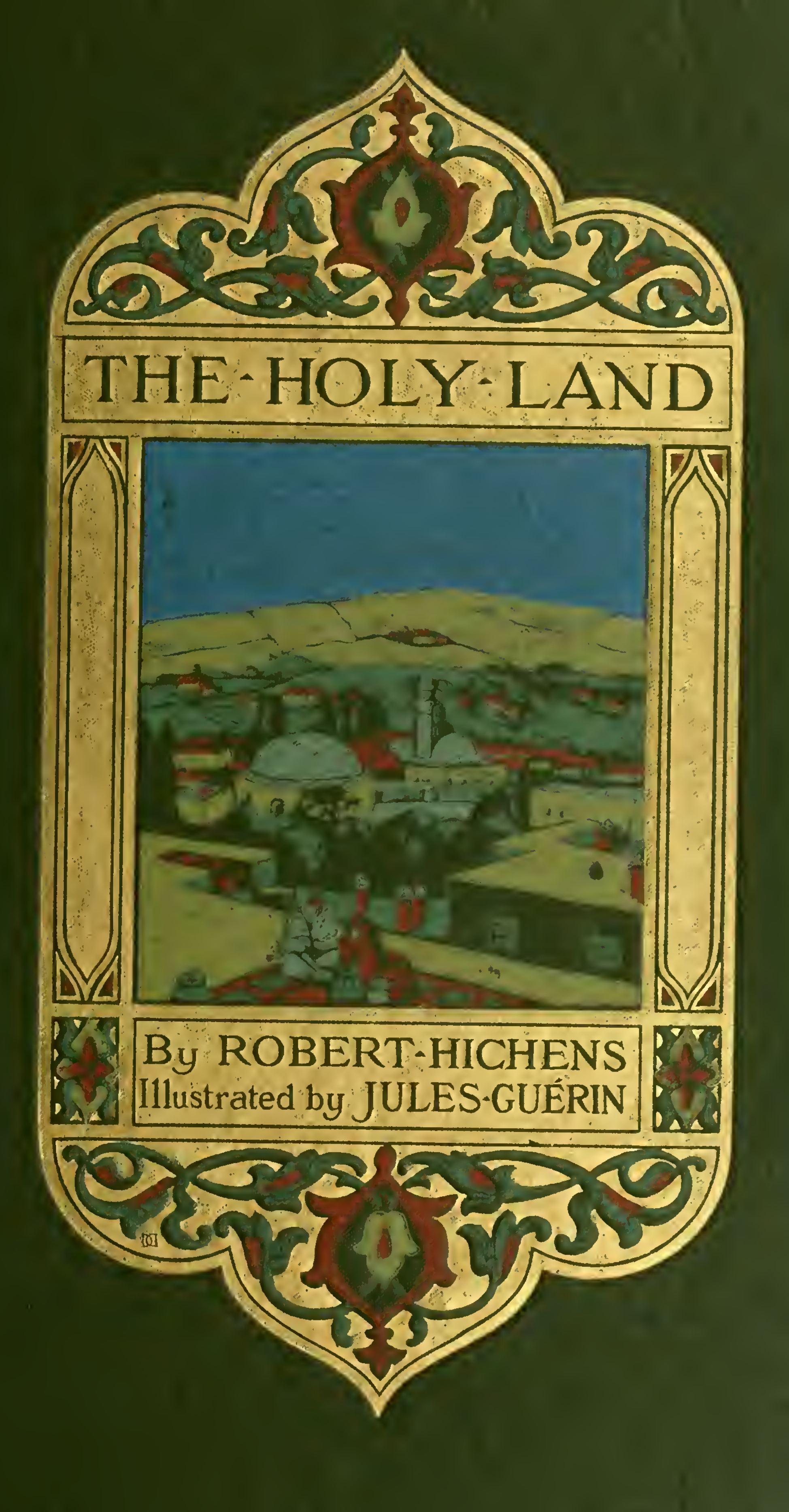

THE·HOLY·LAND
By ROBERT·HICHENS
Illustrated by JULES·GUÉRIN

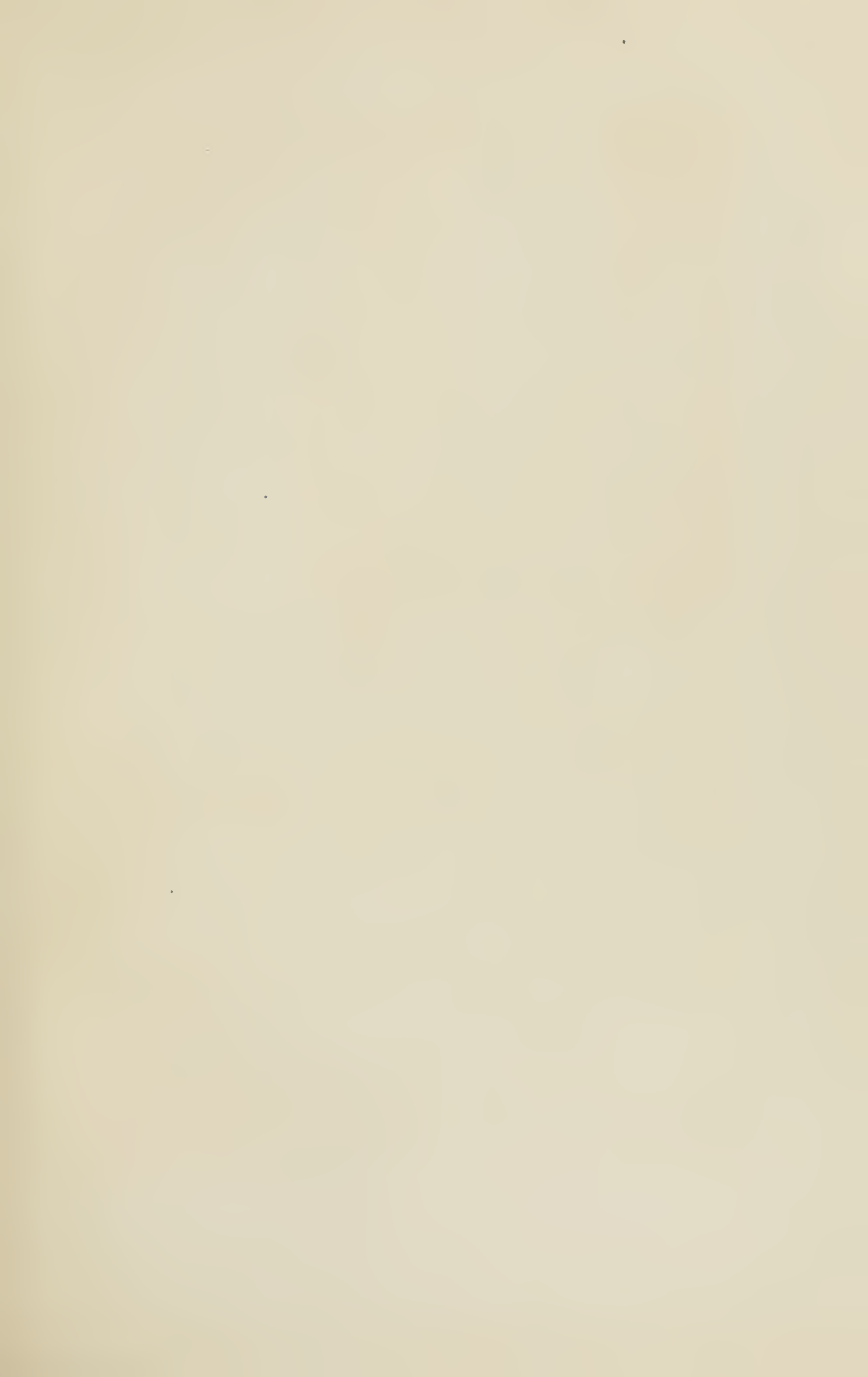




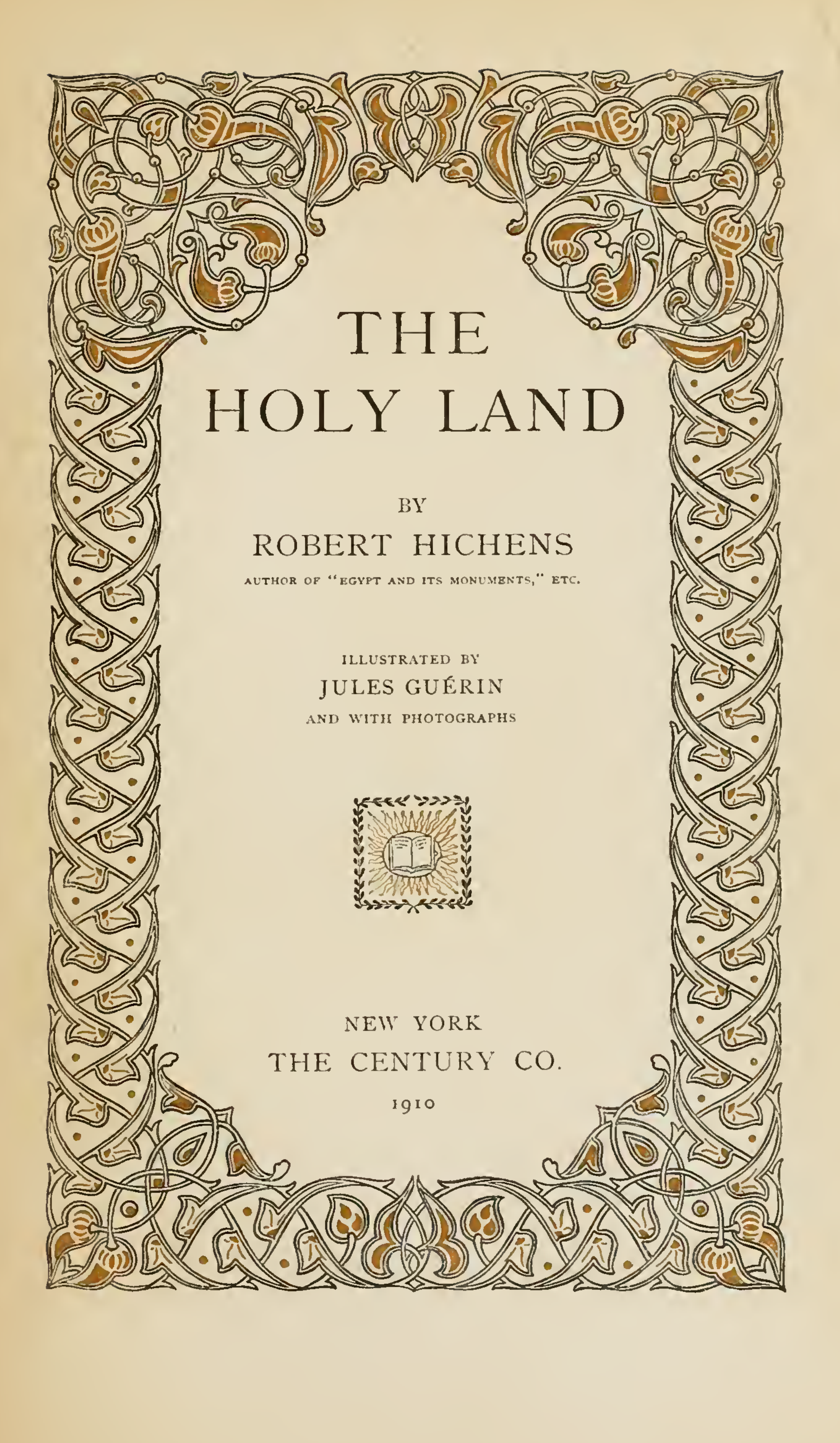


THE HOLY LAND









THE HOLY LAND

BY

ROBERT HICHENS

AUTHOR OF "EGYPT AND ITS MONUMENTS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

JULES GUÉRIN

AND WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

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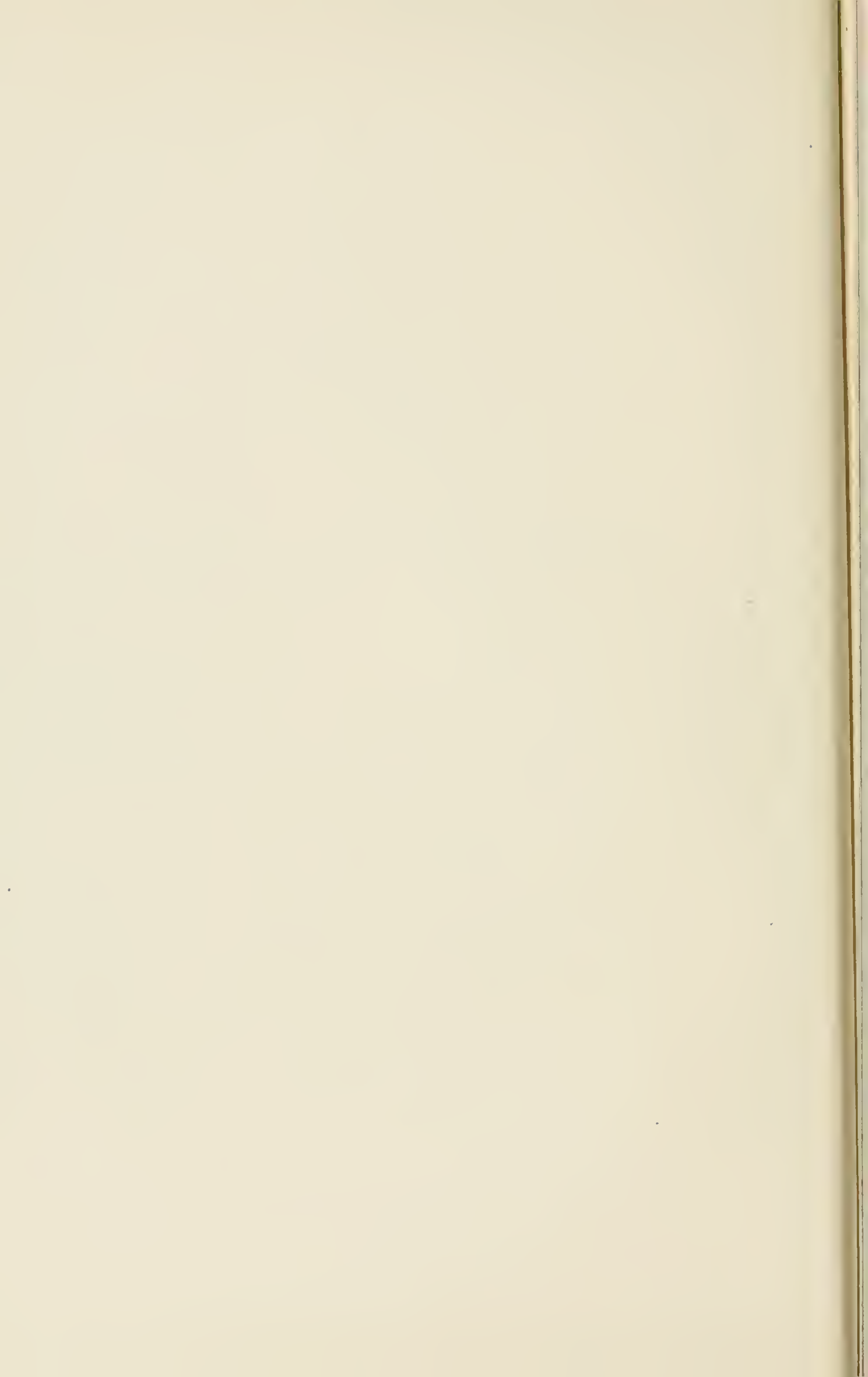
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BAALBEC, THE TOWN OF THE SUN







THE HOLY LAND

I

BAALBEC, THE TOWN OF THE SUN

MANY years ago, on a hot day of September, I came out from the gateway of the Trappist monastery of Staouëli, in Algeria, and wandered along the blinding white road that led toward the prison for military convicts. The sun-scorched uplands stretched to the horizon. In the pellucid clearness of the African atmosphere I could see very far, and vaguely desiring, perhaps, an object for my walk, I gazed about me. Where should I go now that I was beyond the monastery walls?

Far off, standing absolutely alone, I perceived a low, earthen tower. I left the road and directed my steps toward it. As I drew near to it, I saw almost in its shadow a donkey circling monotonously round, turning a water-wheel, and crouched on the hot earth, with his back against the little tower, a boy of perhaps sixteen, gazing dreamily over the plain with wide, blue eyes.

He was a Breton, he told me. A Breton! And why was he there in the burning African summer, so far from his own gray country? Very simply he told me why.

Always, he said, from his earliest youth he had longed to go to the Holy Land, to stand on the sacred spot where Christ had died upon the Cross. He told nothing to any one of his desire, which at last became so keen that secretly he left his home, his native village, and made his way to the nearest seaport. There he saw a ship bound for Algiers. He was so ignorant of geography that he supposed Algiers was a city in Palestine. So he went on board the ship, and presently found himself under the palms of Africa. In Algiers he nearly starved, perhaps would have starved, had he not heard by chance of Staouëli, and of the good Trappists who fed the hungry outside the "gate of heaven." One day he walked out of the city, and at last, nearly dead with fatigue and hunger, came to the monastery's door, above which the Blessed Virgin was smiling. The monks took him in, fed him, clothed him, gave him work. And thus it came about that I found him sitting in the shadow of the tower on that burning day of summer.

"And what are you going to do?" I asked him. "Are you going back to Brittany?"

"No, Monsieur," he replied. "Some day, when I have saved some money, I shall go on."

"Where to?"

"I shall go to the Holy Land."

He waved his hand toward the far-off horizon; he gazed out over the plain.

"I shall see the Holy Land," he murmured almost as if to himself.

I thought of that boy and his dream as I stood on the upland of Reyak, in Syria, one day of the springtime; for I at last was fulfilling a dream of my own: I was on my way to the Holy Land. And the poor little Breton? Was he still crouching beneath his tower in the African solitude, or had he wandered away? Perhaps we should meet again in the Court of the Holy Sepulcher, or among the kneeling pilgrims of Russia, who come to kiss the stone of unction on which, according to tradition, the body of Christ was laid when Nicodemus anointed it.

A warm breeze, which yet hinted that the snows were not far off, blew over the long valley. It caressed the rich, red earth. It stirred the bright, green crops. It ruffled the gray-blue feathers of the pigeons perched on the flat, earth-covered roofs of the low, white houses, above the brown-shuttered windows of which the grass was growing. Through the branches of the mulberry-trees, planted in careful rows, it went; through the silver and green poplars; over the plain toward the round mountains, gray and brown, with great wine-colored patches, which brought to the mind the colored rags of the Bedouin. A dark boy, whose head was covered by a white keffieh bound by two cords of wool, squatted by

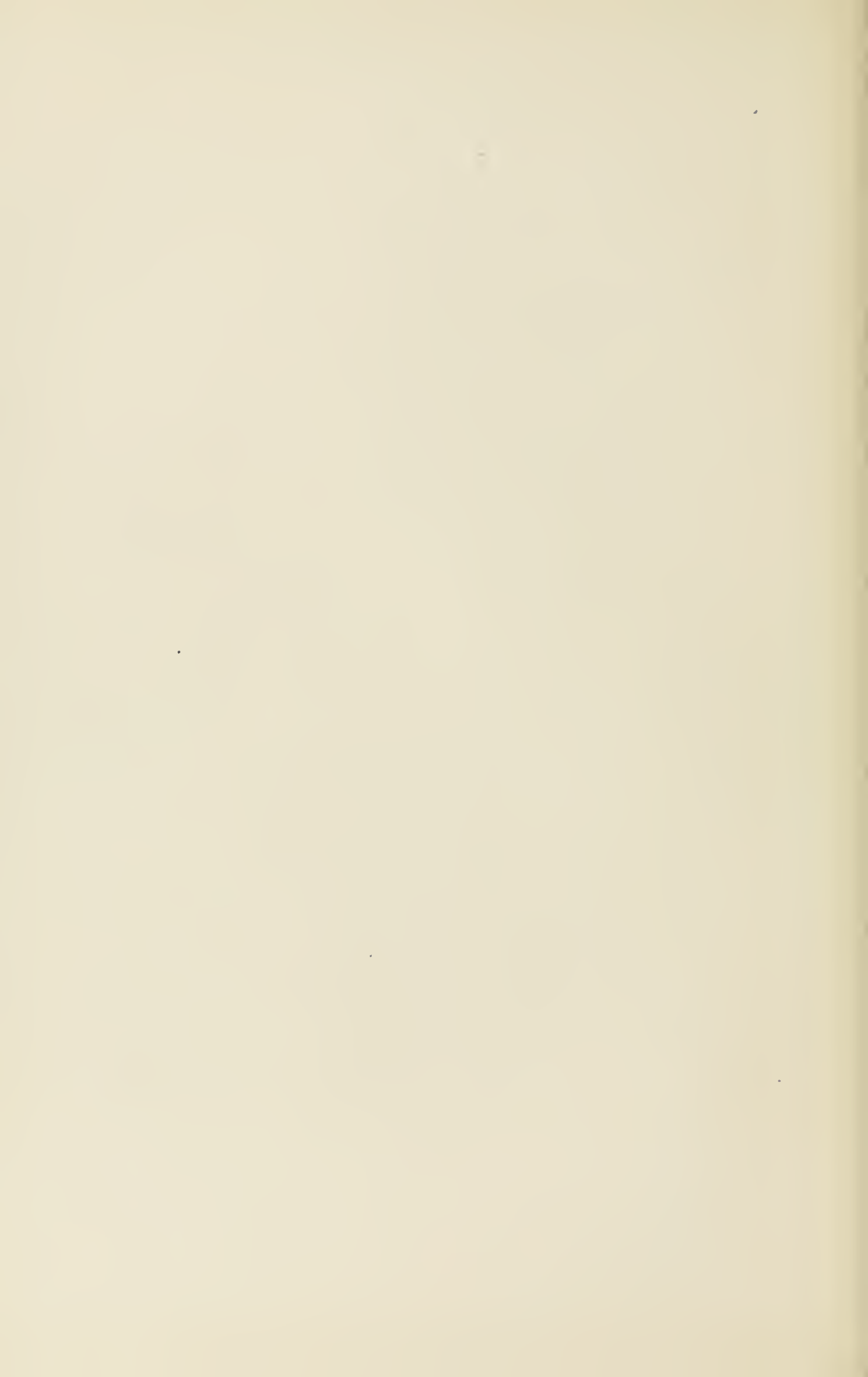
a tethered horse. Some children, in dusty, rose-colored robes, went by in the sunshine, leading a flock of brown and white sheep. A Greek priest, with flowing hair and beard, wearing a tall, black hat, strode past me as if in haste, followed by a huge dog with a curly, yellow coat. Out of the distance, mingling with the songs of the birds, there came a tinkle of bells, the pretty caravan music that one learns to love in the far-off countries. Three camels stepped into sight, accompanied by a tall, barefooted man, thin, with fierce eyes, a strenuous gait, a grave and cruel bearing. They passed, flinging out to the air the light melodies of travel. The man shot out at the Christian dog a glance that could come only from the eyes of a worshiper of the Prophet. He and his beasts went on with a soft determination that suggested fatality. Slowly the chime of the bells died on the fragrant air. To-morrow, perhaps, Damascus would hear it. For that dreamlike city of the East lay hidden among its woods and dancing waters under the tawny hills not far away. Soon I must follow the bells, but not yet; for in the fold of this valley, between the two snow-dappled ranges of mountains, the Lebanon and the Anti-Libanus, lay the antique home of Baal worship. And as the bells lost themselves in the airy distance, I put away from me the thought of Damascus, and turned my face toward the Temple of the Sun.



TEMPLE OF BACCHUS, BAALBEC



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A MAGIC OF STRANGENESS

Some places in foreign lands seem to the traveler far more foreign than others, full of a sort of magic of strangeness. That day, when I came to Baalbec, the hills seemed strange about it, for the snow-fields, broken up by long tracts of chocolate-colored earth, gave to them an appearance almost as bizarre as the appearance of a zebra's back. Under the rays of the burning sun the frail torrents of white, that seemed sweeping through the orchards to break at the feet of the temples, looked like the foam on fairy seas. Between them the white dust flew up from the horses' feet. A hard hill, yellow as the skin of a lion, stared down on the native village. Here and there huge cypresses reared their mournful heads, looking gloomily fantastic, like dignified but eccentric beings in exile, longing for Italian gardens, and aloof from the riot of spring that surged round the Temple of Bacchus. Birds sang everywhere. Among the thin trees hidden children were laughing. A metallic voice cried out some words that I could not understand, and suddenly died away. Three dark, mysterious women went by, shaded by white parasols. And the birds and the children's voices, and the shadows cast by the parasols on the dark faces of women, and the eddies of dust floating toward the orchards,—white floating to white,—and the silhouettes of the cypresses, and the gold and the yellow of ruin and hill, all seemed to me strange, almost magically foreign, that day.

There were no travelers in Baalbec when I was there in the springtime, yet the wonder of white and gold was not for me alone; for the people of Baalbec, like Baalbec itself, are strange. Instead of ignoring their glorious ruins with the contempt or the indifference bred of familiarity, they seem actually to love them. They visit them, they spend the shining hours among them, they laugh, they dream, they pipe, they sing their little, twittering songs where Baal once was worshiped in the ancient days of Solomon; where the Greeks worshiped Helios, god of the sun; where the Romans worshiped Jupiter; where Venus had her votaries, and Bacchus his devotees; where pagans built, and Christians destroyed; where Constantine the Great crushed down the ardors of those who adored the gods; where Timur fought and conquered; where Arabs came and built a fortress and stayed.

The town of Baalbec contains some five thousand inhabitants, about a quarter of whom are Christians. It has a garrison; it is the seat of a bishop of the Greek Catholic church; it owns four mosques, three churches, six schools, four monasteries, three hotels, and a Turkish bath: but all these glories lie far enough apart from the ruins to leave their almost matchless dignity and beauty unimpaired. One thinks of them only for a moment, realizes them not unpleasantly, when one sees two soldiers strolling hand in hand down the staircase of the Temple of Jupiter, or comes upon a group of







THE TEMPLE OF BACCHUS, BAALBEC



serious Arabs among the pillars of the Temple of Bacchus, or surprises a group of women in shining black beneath the Arab tower to the southwest of the temple, or upon the projecting platform, which is thrust out toward the orchards not far from the Columns of the Sun, finds a bevy of brown and bright-eyed Syrian children smiling down at the fairy revels of the white blossoms in the breeze.

Never had I understood how exquisite white can look with gold, fragility with strength, that which has the peculiar loveliness that passes with that which has the peculiar splendor that endures, till I saw the piled golden stones, columns, and mighty walls of Baalbec rising into the sunshine among the white flowers of Baalbec's orchards. Baalbec must be seen, if possible, in spring, and seen at least once not only in the full glory of day, but also when the sun is declining. Then the Columns of the Sun are alive, so it seems, with changing and almost mysterious glories; walls, architraves, door-posts, capitals, and tangled heaps of broken fragments, hold a romantic beauty of color such as I have not seen elsewhere in unpainted stone.

THE STUPENDOUS RUINS

Among the ruins of Baalbec are remains that can only be called stupendous. So stupendous indeed are they that in former days, as possibly now, many of the people of Syria believed Echmoudi, a demon, had reared

them by his magic arts. To this day there are learned Orientals who declare that Baalbec must have existed before the flood, as only mastodons could have transported from the neighboring quarries the huge blocks of stone which are found there. The walls that are still standing are gigantic. The six Columns of the Temple of Jupiter the Sun,—once there were fifty-four of them,—are so nobly tall that they look as if they would fain soar to the deity whose glory they celebrate. Nevertheless, the ruins of Baalbec do not almost stupefy the mind as some ruins in Egypt do by their towering vastness. Although composed of the wreckage of many courts and buildings, they are harmonious. The long and slow passage of time seems, in some subtle way not to be defined, to have resolved all the discords once harshly produced by barbarous man and by barbarous nature. These ruins are very calm. They are bringers of peace to the spirit. They do not amaze too much, nor do they sadden. Indeed, they rather reassure, as the sun does, hinting at stabilities eternal, rectifying—how, we do not exactly know—our pitiful human imaginings, which travel too often toward darkness.

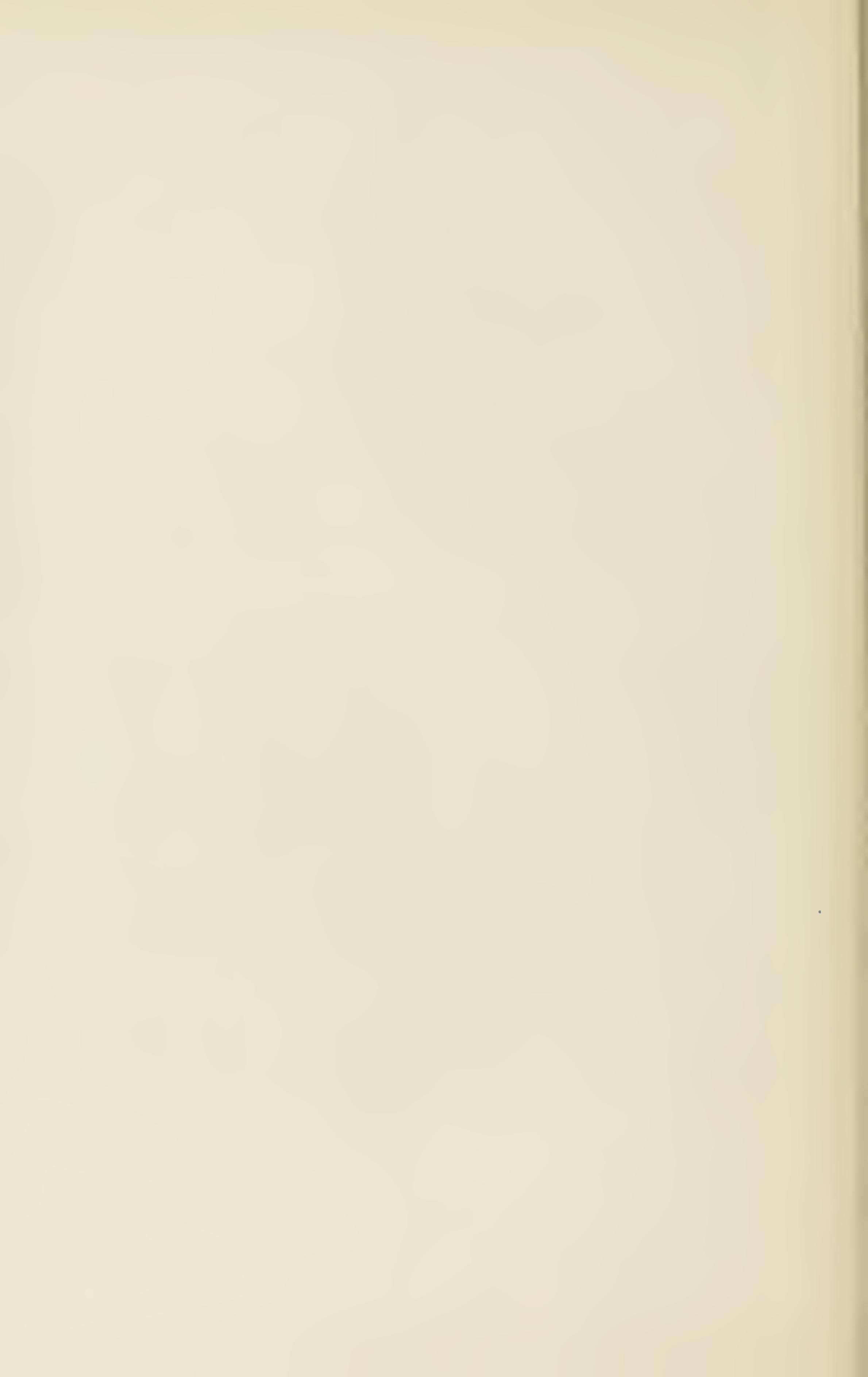
It has been stated, and is often accepted as true, that the ruins of the temples of the Sun and of Bacchus date from the second century of the Christian era, but, according to the Syrian writer Michel Alouf, who is a native of Baalbec, and who, with loving assiduity, has devoted an immense amount of his time to the patient



ALCOVE IN THE ENCLOSURE WALL,
TEMPLE AREA, BAALBEC.



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study of all documents bearing upon the history of his birthplace, this is not the fact. Inscriptions have been discovered by the German excavators, who have done much good work at Baalbec, which prove that the building of the temples was begun by the Romans in the first century after Christ. John Malala of Antioch was therefore mistaken in attributing all the credit for their erection to Antoninus Pius. The great temple, though identified with the sun-god, was dedicated to all the gods of Heliopolis, the smaller temple to Bacchus. Before they became ruins, Arabs had turned them into a fortress.

"THE WONDERFUL SYRIAN SPRING"

But the fact which I always loved to keep in my mind at Baalbec in the wonderful Syrian spring was this: that before Greek and Roman times Baalbec was the sacred city of the East and the home of the adoration of the sun, and that Greeks and Romans, when they had the mastery over the Syrian land, did nothing to interfere with this old, established worship. On the contrary, they adored Jupiter the Sun in the Roman empire, and statues of Baalbec-Jupiter have been found at Niha and elsewhere.

Minutely to describe Baalbec would be merely to repeat in other words information that can be obtained in many guide-books. The effect of it in springtime is extraordinarily beautiful.

In the narrow upland valley, some four thousand feet above the level of the sea, between the ranges of mountains, embraced by multitudes of slim and white-flowering trees,—the very soul of spring made manifest,—rise the huge, uneven walls of Baalbec, broken in many places, but majestically solid, as if built to confront and defy not only the mightiest assaults of men, but the insidious action of time—or even of eternity. They cover a great area, and conceal the courts within; but they allow one side of the Temple of Bacchus to be seen, with a leaning column, and they are victoriously challenged by the six marvelous columns of the Temple of the Sun, the glory of Baalbec, the glory, surely, of Syria, which soar above them and hold the eyes and the imagination. Wherever you stand, whether to the southeast, on the dusty road that leads to the village, or among the snows of the pear-trees, or high upon the slope of the yellow hill that calmly watches over Baalbec, your eyes are drawn to these columns. Look down on them from above, gaze up at them from below, it makes but little difference. They dominate you, as if they possessed a powerful soul, as if they possessed the soul of the great nation that once worshiped the sun.

At Baalbec, as well as the remains of the two grand temples, and the additions made by the Arabs for purposes unconnected with worship, there is a small, circular Temple of Venus, which stands apart from the other ruins; and there are two spacious courts with many

exedræ, or lateral chambers. In these courts, and everywhere about the remains of the temples, lie masses of fallen masonry; capitals carved with acanthus leaves and with the heads of lions; fragments of doorways; sections of rounded pillars and of friezes; bits of architraves; and gigantic blocks which look like the foundation-stones of buildings too huge to have been constructed by men.

There have been many earthquakes at Baalbec, and these mountainous heaps of stone, flung pell-mell in confusion, suggest some great upheaval of nature rather than any human violence. Nevertheless, the tremendous confusion everywhere apparent does not call forth any answering turmoil of the spirit. As one wanders through the ruins, noting the irregular outlines of the Propylæa, shattered giants superb in their decadence; wondering why the stones of the south tower, which look like a mysteriously solidified and arrested cascade, do not fall upon the turmoil of masonry heaped below like rocks on a sea-shore; as one gazes at the very delicate shadows in the arena of the Hexagonal Court, at the herbage peeping out among the blocks of almost white stone near the place where once stood a statue of Hercules, at the herbage growing more lustily in the niches that are gray where the sun does not penetrate, a lovely yellow beneath his beams; as one stands before the deserted chamber of the Roman priests, and listens to the perpetual humming of the happy bees about

it, or before the altar in the great court from which an avenue of ruins leads the eyes to the crenelated outer walls, high above, and far beyond which the glittering snows look down; as one tries to decipher the features of the great god Baal, guarded now by a Roman eagle, or looks up into the face of Diana, beneath whose pedestal four faithful hounds keep watch; as one falls half in love with the girl carved on the bath of the Roman priests, who sits with her head thrown back and a *cupidon* near her, while close by a woman takes her companion gently by the neck, with a deliciously tender gesture, perhaps to draw her attention to the second *cupidon* flying so lightly toward them, or is swept to a sterner mood by the sudden vision of helmeted Mars flanked by the heads of bulls — as one looks, and pauses, and wanders on, a great feeling of calm enfolds him, but of a calm made light and brilliant by the lightness and brilliance of spring. And the beautiful day wears on, and its gradual passing is marked by the stones of Baalbec. They were brought together to do homage to the sun, and the sun has them in possession. Upon the six Columns of Jupiter the Sun one may read the record of dawn, of noon, of the mystic approach of night.

The so-called "small Temple of Bacchus" is the best preserved of the ruins of Baalbec, and is perhaps the most perfect ancient building in Syria. Surrounded by fallen splendors, it seems, compared with them, with





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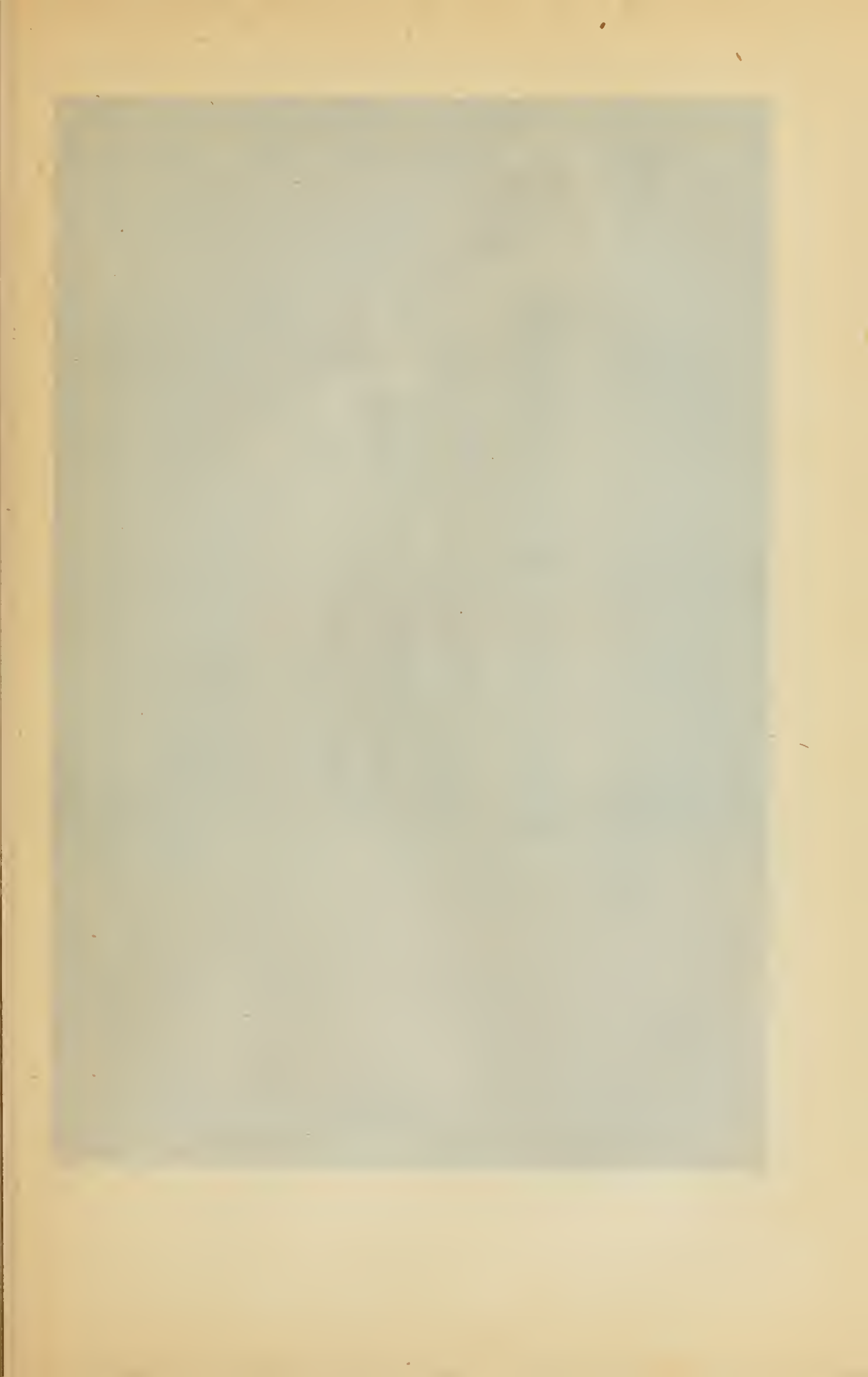
INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF BACCHUS, BAALBEC



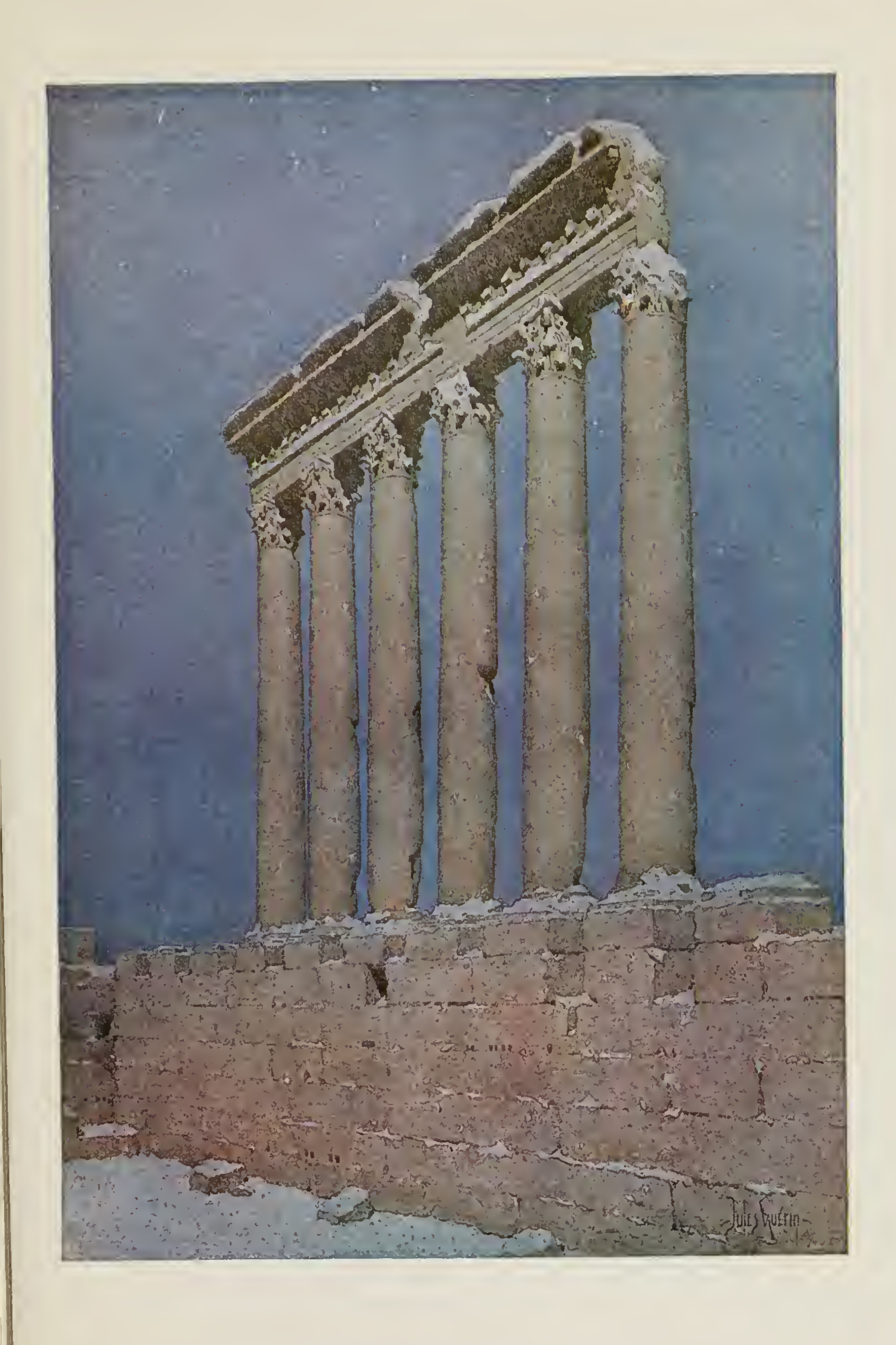
its grand columns, its splendidly ornamented doorway, carved with flowers, fruits, vine-leaves, cupids bearing bunches of grapes and ears of corn, its sections of exquisitely sculptured ceiling, its double frieze, its naos, with graceful, fluted pilasters, its delicately graven, dancing bacchantes, cupids, and fauns, eagles, animals, and gods, an almost complete sanctuary, although it is of course but the ornate specter of what it was before earthquakes shook, and Arabs overbuilt, and Turks barbarously defaced, it. In color it is lovely — a rich, warm, lustrous gold, in places deepening to a golden brown. And against this gold and golden brown, as if to emphasize them and to continue here the color scheme of Baalbec in springtime, there is set a white staircase of narrow steps which leads up to the temple's sanctuary. Upon two pilasters here are engraved figures of women dancing the *danse du ventre.* In the north wall there is a tablet inserted to commemorate the visit of the German Emperor, who encamped within the ruins in the great court when he came to Syria as the guest of Abdul-Hamid. The general effect of this temple, seen from without, is of massive dignity, of solid nobility and majesty, rather than of sensitiveness and grace. From the northwest it looks specially fine, with the nine upstanding columns. Seen from the front, it shows more fearlessly its ruin. One of the most glorious bits is the east portico, with the four close-set columns, two smooth, two fluted. The interior, which is

open to the sky, although the outer wall of the temple is connected with the entablature above the columns by a handsome ceiling of carved stone, contains a mass of delicious detail. And here grace and almost tender refinement are happily allied with massive power. Much of the carving of leaf and flower and fruit, of vase and fir-cone and bird, is quite lovely and amazingly intricate and delicate; and the breaking up of the walls into double rows of niches, divided by fluted pillars, with elaborately carved capitals, produces a singularly rich, yet almost austerely pure, effect.

This temple stands on a high platform of huge blocks of rugged stone. I paused by the solitary column which — for how many years! — has leaned perilously, so it seems, against the smooth outer wall of the temple, resting on the edge of its base, and I looked down at the world beneath. Immediately below me was a little orchard of tiny and frail trees, some just springing into leaf, others just breaking into blossoms of virginal white. There was something almost pathetic in this minute vision of half-frightened, half-daring spring, timorously creeping to the foot of the giant mass of stone, as if to shroud its savage strength in a robe of green and white, to baptize it with youthful perfume. Beyond the trees were the mauve, yellowish-white, and gray-mauve houses of the town of the sun, with pale-red roofs and arched central windows, backed by low green and brown hills, tranquil and tender in the soft-



THE COLUMNS OF THE SUN, BAALBEC


Jules Guérin



ening light of the waning afternoon. Some birds that looked like swallows wheeled perpetually in the light-blue sky, and upon the topmost golden stones of a partly ruined wall, raised up by Arabs, wild pigeons perched, and preened themselves, happy perhaps in the company of the winged geniuses, the winged loves, the harmless eagles, not far below them.

"THE SIX MIGHTY COLUMNS OF THE SUN"

But more wonderful than this temple; than the little Temple of Venus; than the Arab fortifications of the time of Bahram Schah; than the trilithon, with its three terrific blocks of stone, each one of them over sixty-three feet in length; than the Hexagon and Great Courts, sometimes called the Forecourt and the Court of the Altar — more wonderful indeed than anything else in Baalbec, are the six mighty Columns of the Sun.

These columns now represent that vast Temple of the Sun and of the ancient gods of Heliopolis which was once the glory of Syria. The building that belonged to them — remembering them clearly, I cannot say to which they belonged — is now merely a mass of ruins. According to some writers, these columns are over seventy feet high; according to others, not quite seventy. The effect of them, when they are seen from close beneath the great wall which supports them, is that they are towering into heaven. Each of them is of one size from base to capital. The wall on which they are set is con-

siderably higher than the height of a tall man. Three immense fragments of stone go to the making of each column. The capitals are Corinthian, surmounted by a glorious architrave, with entablature, frieze, and cornice. Upon this there is elaborate and very fine carving, showing acanthus leaves and roses, with little lions, and also some heads of lions with open jaws. But it is not detail that you notice, or detail that you love, when first you stand before these columns. They overwhelm you by the sum total of their splendor, which is so extraordinary that it has the blotting-out power peculiar to the tremendous manifestations of man's creative genius. As you look up at them, you forget everything else in Baalbec. All things around you seem suddenly to fade, to grow thin and pale and unreal. These Columns of the Sun dominate like the sun.

When the complete temple stood firm in the ancient days, it was surrounded by fifty-four such columns. The imagination is impotent to conceive what was the effect of a building so hemmed in, worthy to be so guarded. And yet it seems to me not improbable that the present loneliness of these columns enhances the vast impression which they make upon the mind. They are giants in a world that owns no other giants, standing up, as they do, against the wonder of the spring, with no interposing walls to shut away from them the far-off mountains, nature's giants, as they are man's. Some ruins completely satisfy as ruins. Others make



TEMPLE OF VENUS, BAALBEC



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one sigh for a lost perfection. The Columns of the Sun at Baalbec call up only the secret murmur, "It is enough."

If we compare them with the columns outside the Temple of Bacchus, which have as background the temple wall, we are able to realize, I think, that certain advantages flow sometimes even from the blind fury of vandals. The Columns of Bacchus are similar in shape to those of the sun. They are only some six feet shorter. And yet, grand though they are, how almost paltry they seem when compared with their desolate neighbors! For they fall into place as an important part, but only a part, of the noble detail of a building. One can admire them, wonder at them, but one can forget them. Never could one forget the Columns of the Sun. Once seen, they stand out forever in the memory. I have called them golden columns, and I have spoken of the golden stones of Baalbec. Go to Baalbec, and you will recognize the justice of the description. You will see there stone that is white, gray with a grain of black, earth-colored, yellow, yellow-brown. But when the sun is shining, and at certain hours of the day, much of the stone is of a strangely rich and glorious golden color, sometimes with hints of red in it, such as one sees in the skin of an orange. The natives say that it is the prolonged action of the weather—of wind and rain, of snow and sun—that has tinted the masonry. And they showed me stone recently released from the embrace of

the earth by German excavators. This was pale, indeed, almost white. A quantity of it can be seen in the staircase at the end of the Temple of Bacchus. Compare it with the stone of which the Columns of the Sun are composed, and you will see how blessed it is to be weather-beaten in Syria.

It is as if the sun had resolved to set his seal upon the remains of the building erected in his honor, and not only to set his seal, but also to record each day the fleeting hours of gold. For almost as Eastern carpets change when held in different lights, or when suddenly stretched, and then allowed to fall into deep or shallow folds, these columns change mysteriously in obedience to the variations in the light which falls upon them. They have not of course the glowing mystery of amber, because they are not transparent, but they have something of amber's loveliness when exposed to a soft yet brilliant radiance; and they seem to divest themselves of the uncompromising character of stone under the influence of the sun.

SUNSET AT BAALBEC

When the glory of full day begins to fade along the upland valley, and strange colors appear in the sky, do not leave the Columns of the Sun. Go to the right, facing them, mount up a little, sit on one of the fallen slabs of masonry not far from the staircase of Jupiter and the altar of the burnt offerings, and await the slow

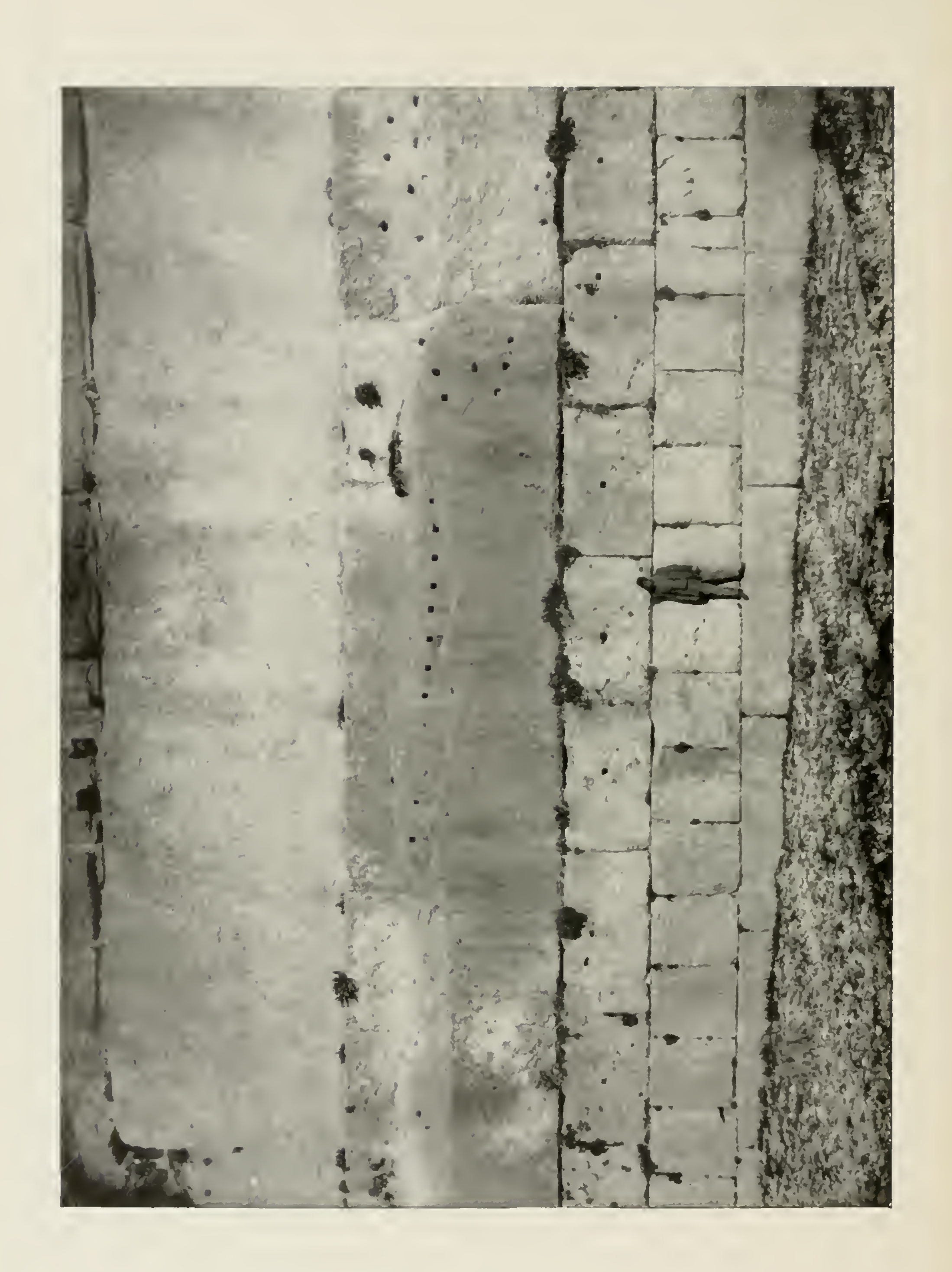
coming of twilight. Through the spaces between the columns you can see part of the ruined fortress of Sheik Abdullah, eight hundred years old; to the left is the Temple of Bacchus; behind are a wall, some low, white houses, some yellow hills, and the snows. A great owl, which seems to make his dwelling-place somewhere in the splendid cornice above the columns, flies slowly out each evening when the sun is declining. Slowly and heavily he starts on a journey over the orchards where the Syrian children are laughing and playing. The fires of the sunset increase. The columns glow. The yellow of the stone holds red lights. The gray of the stone reveals bright veins of gold.

At this hour the majesty of Baalbec is at its height. Always the cradle of sun-worship from the earliest times of antiquity, it is full to this day of the spell of the sun. And do not his worshipers still come there sometimes from far over the seas?

As the evening draws on, the inhabitants of Baalbec go quietly home from the ruins. The twitter of the Syrian pipe is silent, and the worshiper from afar may enjoy a complete solitude. In the gentler, the more tranquil light that pervades the upland valley, the remains of temples and towers, of altars, stairways, portals, and fortifications look more mysterious and more vast. The terrific walls seem to increase in height and in solidity as the shadows gather more thickly about them. The heavy superstructure of stone, like a misplaced section

of some battlemented castle such as the castle on the height near Cæsarea Philippi, which frowns above the columns on the left of the portal to the Temple of Bacchus, is no longer merely barbaric. There is something sinister in its dark outline relieved sharply against the sky. The noble doorway in the northeast corner of the Great Court shows an interior blackness that is almost like the blackness of a dungeon, in which the half-seen shapes of fallen fragments of stone seem crouching like things in fear. Above it the tufts of herbage that grow on each side of the niche, with its projecting and arched cornice, make soft clouds of delicate gloom. In the Hexagonal Forecourt and the Court of the Altar there is still a brightness of day, but the low and wide archways in the surrounding wall of the former contain patches of blackness that seem to have been cut from the garments of night. And from the latter stretches away a wonder of broken beauty, partly closed in by the battlements of the Arabs. Light and shadow play almost mystically over the vast expanse of the ruined Acropolis. The shadow has taken possession of the Columns of the Sun, is turning their gold to black, but the flat pavement near the remnants of the Basilica of Theodosius gleams with a primrose yellow, and the drab walls have become a somber brown. Looking east, between the Propylæa, the tiny branches of some fruit-trees make a network of jet black against the clear saffron of the sky. Near them a doorway, that in the distance





FOUNDATION WALL OF THE GREAT TEMPLE
AREA, BAALBEC



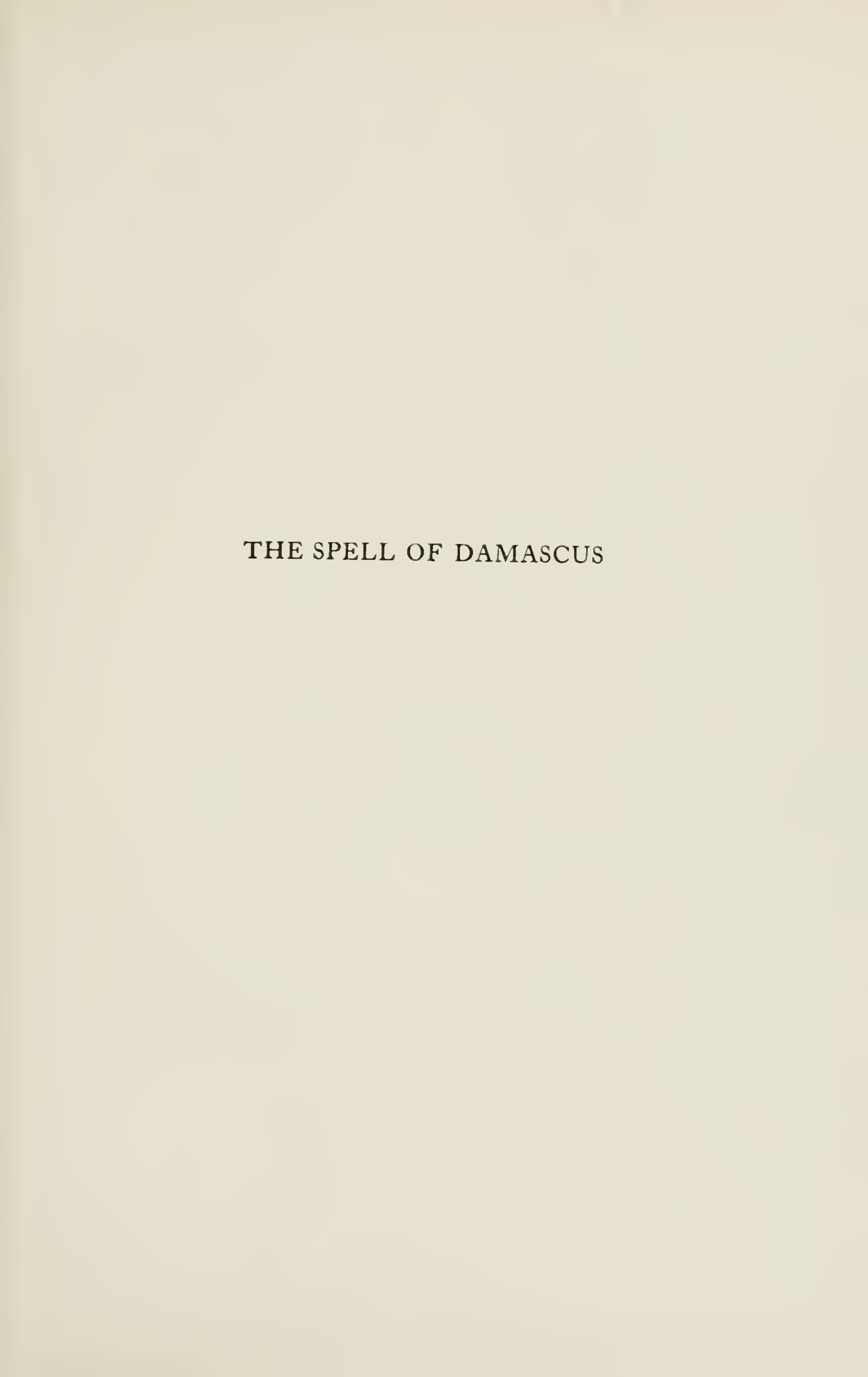
looks like the minute opening in a fairy's house, holds an oblong of light that suggests the light of heaven.

Before the darkness of the swiftly approaching night comes down upon the town of the sun, and the moon and the silence hold it through the hours of sleep, pass once more across the Court of the Altar, between the blocks of masonry, the piles of stone bullets once used by the Arabs as missiles, the broken columns of Assuan granite, and the baths of the Roman priests, and mount up to the high platform, or terrace, that commands a great view of the valley. Far down below the white orchards lie. The snows of the Lebanon mountains for a moment are touched with rose. Some stones of the ruins still glow with gold, and some of the nearer hills are a tawny yellow. In the distance the orchards melt away into a dusky green of crops — barley and young corn. Farther away the green in its turn melts into red browns and into varying shades of yellow that strongly suggest the desert. Very calm are the hills in this evening hour. The valley of Baal seems a protected place, a safe and concealed hermitage hidden away from the world, where the sun-god loves to come secretly to behold the place of his antique worship.

But the gold fades from the stones of the temples. All the red lights are gone from the Columns of the Sun. Transformed, made almost tragic, they stand up against a sky in which the first star is shining. Ghostly pale are the orchards. The children's laughter has died

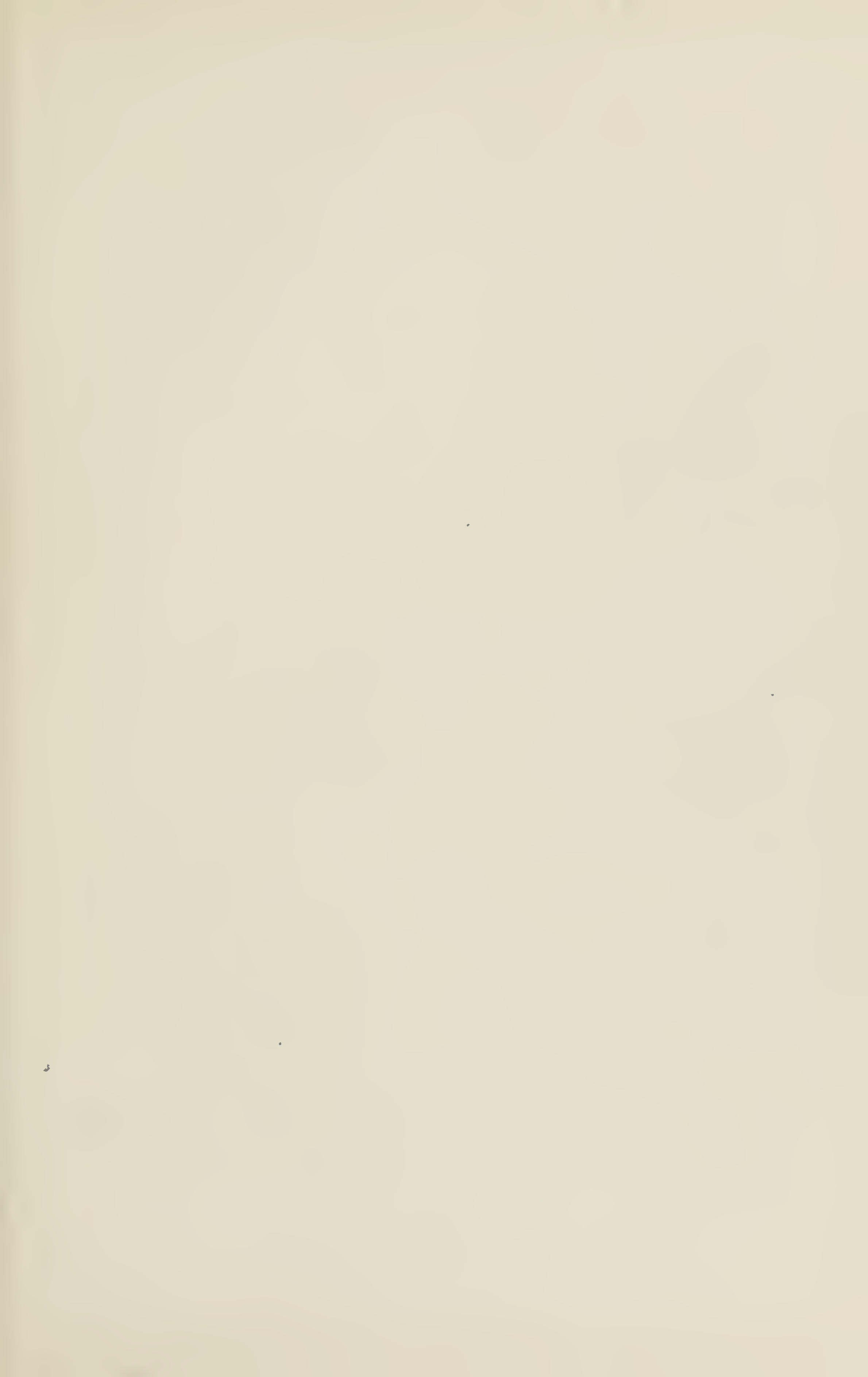
away. Down below, from the shadows, a woman's voice cries in Arabic, "Come in! It is time to sleep." Some little, naughty child is hiding from the veiled mother among the pear-trees. A bell chimes from the village.

And the caravan bells? It is so quiet, so breathlessly still, in the valley of Baal, that I can surely hear them, too, far off in the lovely evening, chiming, chiming by the rushing Barada, between the silver poplars, as the camels go softly on toward the minarets of Damascus. They are calling, and I must follow, to the city of the narghile and the striped sofas, that ancient city which is "the head of Syria."



THE SPELL OF DAMASCUS






Jules Guérin

THE SWEETMEAT BAZAAR, DAMASCUS



II

THE SPELL OF DAMASCUS

DAMASCUS is one of the most ancient cities in the world. It looks one of the newest. The approach to it is strangely alluring, but the traveler is deceived: there is nothing to lead him to suppose that he is nearing the "great and sacred city" of Julian, a capital to this day full of religious fanatics, whose adoration is mingled with the robust desire to exterminate. Rather does he seem to be enticed onward toward some town of the sirens, where all the pleasures await him.

Long before the great plain in which Damascus lies opens out from the Gorge of the Barada,—that "golden stream" of the Greeks which to this day is the joy of the dark-eyed Easterns who dwell in the earthly paradise; long before the green cloud of the woods which encircle it floats into sight under the radiant sky; long before the first minaret lifts itself up toward heaven, he who goes to Damascus is thrilled with anticipation. It is the Barada which excites in him this mood of expectant ardor. Many miles before Damascus is reached he is in sight of a stream that looks curiously mischievous

and happy as it winds between the hills through an avenue of poplars. At first it is small and furtive, as if bent on keeping its frolicsome joy to itself. It seems to wish to go on its way in hiding; but it chuckles irrepressibly, like a child that cannot contain its pleasure. It knows it is going to Damascus, but it does not wish you to share its knowledge. The red and the golden hills enfold it closer and closer, like arms of the desert determined to silence its silvery voice forever, to arrest its dancing feet, by crushing its life out in a long and sterile embrace. But it seems only to gain in courage and mischief in the presence of danger. It ceases to be furtive; it forgets to hide its sweet knowledge; it becomes friskily defiant as it now boldly dances onward. And the silver poplars increase about it, as if to afford it protection against the cruel but beautiful hills.

Golden and red, silver and silver-green is the way that leads to Damascus, and the Barada dances, dances along it till the traveler's heart dances too, in sympathy with the stream's secret, which the stream can conceal no longer. "I am going to Damascus" becomes "We are going to Damascus," and at last the whole soul of the traveler is aflame with anticipation. He remembers that for long ages the Arabs have called the city under the sacred Jebel Kasyun one of the four terrestrial paradises. He remembers that it is the fabled city of fountains, of languid gardens, of red roses which pour forth the sweetest perfume emitted by flowers that do not grow in the gardens of heaven. He remembers that

there the Indian pilgrims, returning from Mecca, rest under the arcades of the Mosque of Sultan Selim and anticipate the joys that are promised hereafter to the faithful Moslem. Mohammed, when a camel-driver, looked at Damascus from the mountain, and refused to enter it, lest he should be content there to resign the glories of paradise. But the less austere traveler, hurried along by the hurrying stream, as if hand in hand with a wildly joyous child, comes at last into the plain where the great, green glades stretch out toward the Syrian desert. He sees the Minaret of the Bride and the dome of the Omayyade Mosque. He hears the soft murmur of waters threading their way beneath the branches of fruit-trees, and he thinks, perhaps, too soon, "this is the Promised Land."

Damascus has a spell. Jerusalem is austere. Damascus, though sacred, is seductive, a city in which to sink down and to forget. And so, after all, is the traveler entirely deceived? Silken garment and hair shirt — so I think of Damascus and Jerusalem, cities representative of two religions, of the faith that promises sensual joys, and of the faith that bids its followers soar above the raptures of the flesh into the rarified air where the spirit can breathe and be strong.

Damascus is for the Moslem; Jerusalem, despite the growing dominion of the Jew, to whom has come much power in the city of the stones of the Temple, but also of the Holy Sepulcher, is for the Christian.

The view of Damascus from the mountain where Mo-

hammed made his great renunciation is one of the marvelous views of the world. Again and again I deserted the mosques, the bazaars, the marble baths, the courts of the fountains, the shadowy khans and the gardens by the streams, for that bare height on which Abraham is said to have had the unity of God revealed to him.

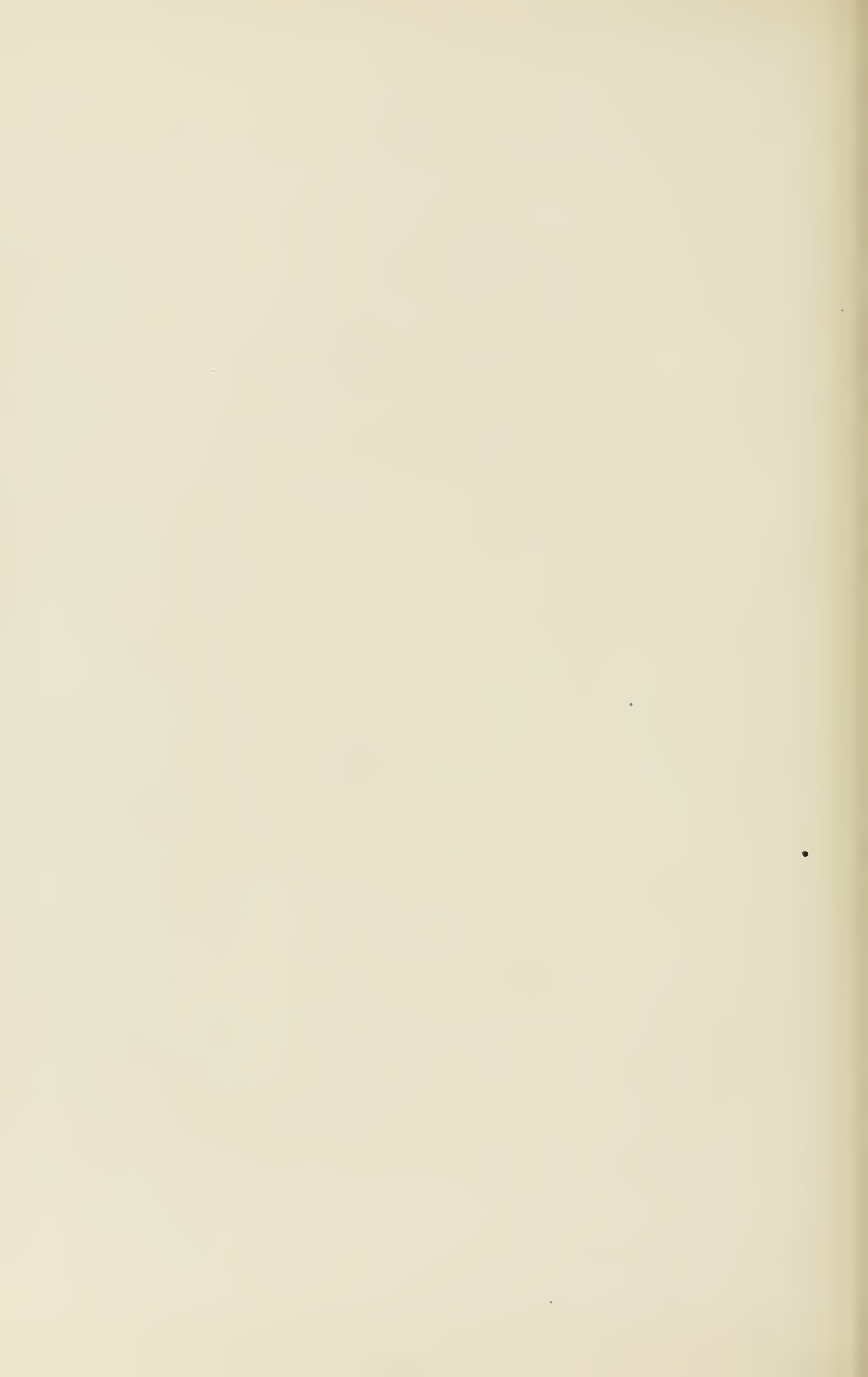
A "CITY OF MAGIC"

An Oriental city of magic called up by a slave of the lamp to realize one's dream of the Orient; a city ethereally lovely, exquisitely Eastern, ephemeral, to be blown away by a breath like a tuft of thistle-down, not white, but delicately pale with a pallor holding the faintest hint of a sea-shell flush; a city slender, calm, almost mystic in its fragile grace, set in the heart of a great wonder of green, a maze of bright and ardent woods beyond which lie the desert spaces—this is Damascus from the mountain of Jebel Kasyun. It holds one almost breathless, seen thus from afar. Too perfect it looks to be a continuing city. Surely a wind will come from the cruel desert, and—p'ff!—it will be no more. Like gossamer away will fly those multitudes of tenderly fragile minarets, those little cupolas, those flat-roofed houses that seem to have no solidity, to be made of pearl or some elfin substance. And the woods will hold no longer their Eastern vision, and the waters will sing no longer to the mirage that forever has faded. And perhaps the wind does come, from the Great Syrian desert or from



THE COURT OF THE OMAYYADE MOSQUE, DAMASCUS





the glittering crest of Hermon. And, lo! the vision does not fly before it out of the heart of the woods. The wind passes and dies at the edge of the sands, or returns unappeased to the snows. And still the ethereal city is there, a dream that has stayed; is there, keeping you motionless, entranced by its tender beauty. And still the waters are singing like happy lovers to the minarets of marble.

That is one aspect of Damascus. Let us take another.

The great Omayyade Mosque in the midst of the city has three minarets. From the summit of the Medinet-el-Arus, or Minaret of the Bride, there is a view over the whole of Damascus. The town of a dream is there spread out beneath you, but it has changed, has become real, definite, an immense maze of poplars and dried mud houses, and of mosques, from which rise the strange and nasal cries of the East. Tunis, seen from the roof of the Bey's palace, is a dazzling ivory white. Damascus is only pale. Some of the roofs of its houses are tiled with red. Most of them are flat. The prevalent color is a faint, sandy yellow, very pallid, broken up by the red roofs and by some white façades. The houses are crammed closely together. A few trees, as if with an obstinate effort, thrust themselves up above the buildings. And these trees are mostly large and dusty cypresses, not standing in companies, but solitary, severe. The dark-green notes of color are a memorable feature in Damascus. There

are scarcely any palms. From the Minaret of the Bride I saw but one, a date-palm that looked unhealthy and out of place. Seen at close quarters, the city looks new, and preserves its oddly ephemeral appearance. A breath might have no effect on it, one thinks, but a hard push would surely overthrow it. Running through it are some long Fafnir-like monsters, that lift themselves high above the houses, round-backed, lead-colored, hideous. These are the wooden, tunnel-shaped roofs, sheeted with lead, that cover in the famous bazaars from the burning rays of the sun. Minarets rise on all sides, some of them very beautiful — striped minarets, minarets dark green, yellow, gray and white, or brilliant with Oriental tiles. And all over the city are squat cupolas, like rows of turned-down cups set close together. These are the roofs of Arab baths.

Upon the housetops of Damascus, though many of them are evidently used as terraces, one sees but few people. Now and then a veiled woman appears for a moment; now and then a child runs out, waving its little arms. But most of the inhabitants are either within, or are swarming through the narrow and busy streets, which teem till after nightfall with a throng in which an European is seldom visible. Into these streets you cannot see from the Minaret of the Bride. Almost the whole of the interior of the city is hidden from you. Only two or three courtyards, with orange-trees and fountains, show themselves with a furtive coquetry to

the eyes; and the white barracks boldly, almost impudently, reveal themselves, with the Barrack Square, in which doll-like soldiers in uniforms that look black are doing their drill in the sunshine. A sound of drums rolls up to the summit of the minaret, and the occasional call of a bugle.

Everywhere in the distance, beyond the houses, the lovely green glades that are the pride of Damascus close softly in. The Anti-Libanus mountains, which seem very close in the clear and radiant atmosphere, lift up their shining snows. Near them are hard, round, yellowish-white hills, with native villages here and there huddled closely against them. Farther off are low, romantic, cinnamon-colored hills melting away into spaces that look like the beginning of the desert—spaces that seem to be trembling gently, as watery mirage seems to tremble ghostlike amid the sands. For the great desert is very near to Damascus—so near to it that it is like a town set in a lovely oasis, a paradise of shade and waters, of roses and singing birds, through which there sometimes filters a breath from the burning wastes, like a Bedouin passing through a throng of chattering townsfolk.

THE TRUE ORIENT

Damascus is still thoroughly Oriental. Cairo has become horribly official and cosmopolitan; Algiers and Tunis are very French; Jerusalem is the home of

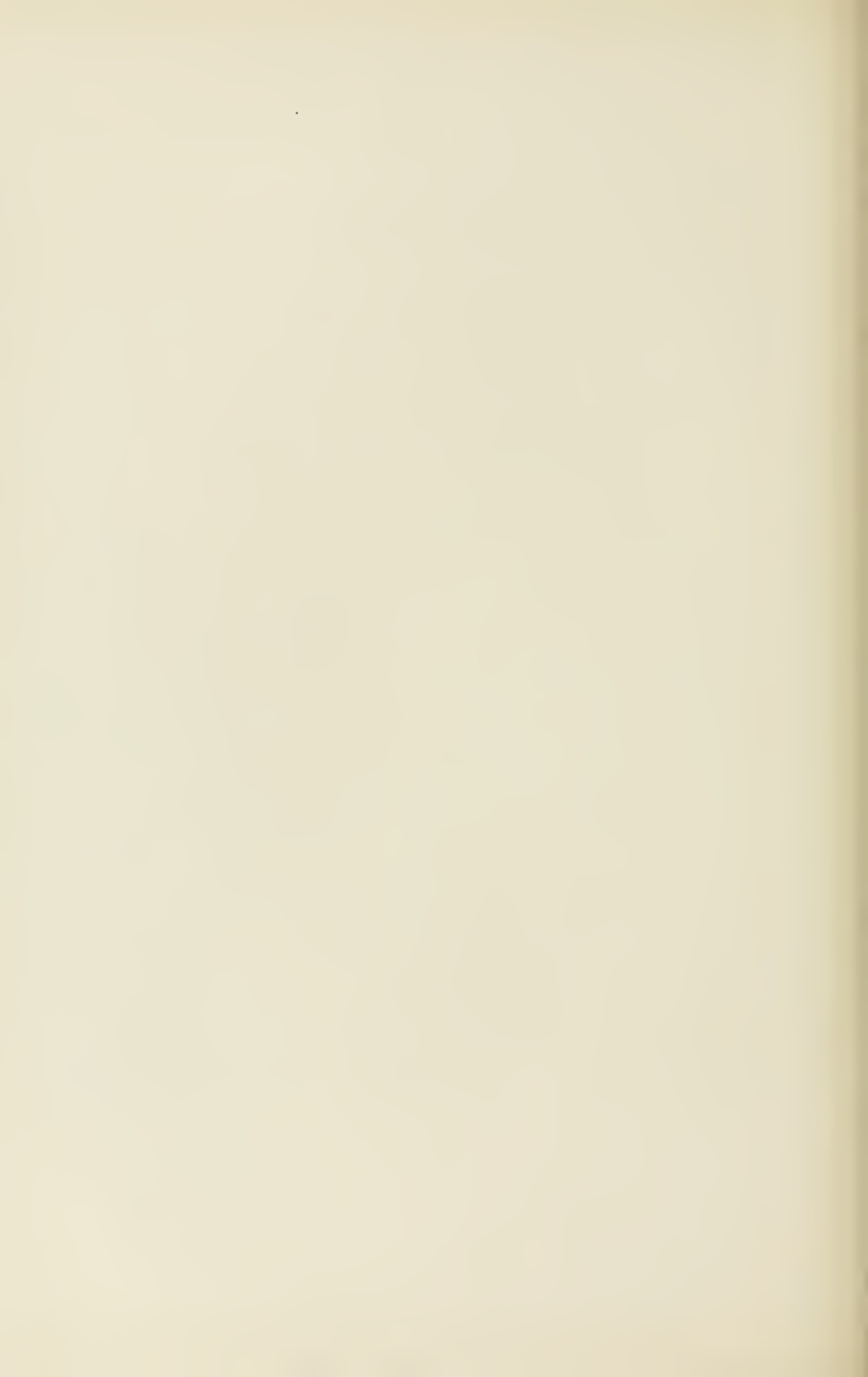
religious sects; Beirut contains numbers of Italians, Maltese, Greeks, and Americans: but the fez prevails in the streets and bazaars of Damascus, where once, during a four-hour walk through the principal quarters, I did not meet one man who was not an Eastern or see one house which looked European. Even the trams which, alas! much against the will of many of the Damascenes, have been introduced into the city, and which run out slowly toward the village of Es-Salehiyeh, scarcely interfere with the Eastern atmosphere. They are so small, so dusty, so desert yellow, contain so few persons behind their fluttering curtains, and creep so humbly, almost as if ashamed, upon their way, that one scarcely notices their presence. The bulk of the citizens will have nothing to do with them, preferring to walk, to drive in the excellent carriages, built in the city and drawn by handsome horses, or to ride when going about their affairs. For they love not change of any kind, and though generally very polite and even helpful to travelers, are proud, often fanatical, and inclined to be thoroughly satisfied with themselves and what was good enough for their forefathers. The granting of the Constitution to the Turkish Empire, instead of being received with general joy in Damascus, horrified many worthy citizens. And though I heard public orations expressive of gratification at the new freedom loudly applauded by Moslems in the circus, there is certainly in Damascus, or was when I was there, a large



WITHIN THE COLONNADE OF THE OMAYYADE MOSQUE



From a photograph by Bonfils



and influential section of opinion bitterly hostile to the young Turks and all their doings.

But leaving politics and religion aside, and observing the Damascenes at business and at pleasure, in street, bazaar, and garden, in the dancing-houses and the cafés, or galloping over the green, or along the road that leads past the Tekkiyeh, or Pilgrims' House, of Sultan Selim into the midst of the woods, one is surprised by their incessant activity in seeking for gain, and entertained by their vivacious delight in amusement. Yet they can dream. For is not this the town of the narghile and of the striped sofas? The ideal dreaming-place of the Damascene is a public garden or a café, bordered on one side by running water, and lavishly furnished with a multitude of straight-backed, striped sofas, which are stacked together anyhow, under a tree or in a corner, in the "off-hours" of the day, and are set out in rows when customers begin to pour in.

The gardens are often large. They are quite uncultivated, and know not the green sward which is so grateful in Western gardens. Big walnut-trees, poplars,—the poplar is the principal tree in this region,—the almond, and various kinds of fruit-trees cast masses of shade over the wrinkled earth. Here and there are rough arbors made of trellis-work, sometimes surrounded by the tall bushes on which, in their season, flower the world-famous roses from which the attar of roses is distilled. Beneath the arbors stand discolored

wooden tables. At the entrance there is probably a low, white-plastered house for the guardian, with a roof of dried and beaten earth laid on poplar beams. Near it is a fountain.

A calm cheerfulness pervades these pleasaunces. People stroll in quietly, to squat on the striped sofas and listen to the murmur of the water while they drink a cup of coffee, a glass of syrup or raki, and smoke, of course, the imposing narghile, with its long, red tube, ending in green and black. Men are not the only smokers. I have often seen Jewesses in these gardens, fat matrons from the ghetto, with colored and figured handkerchiefs tied over their greasily shining hair, chattering of their families and affairs between the greedily enjoyed whiffs. It is the men who are dreamers. The women talk busily. In the cafés one sees no women.

The typical café of Damascus is a long and rather narrow shed formed by a wooden roof supported by slender wooden pillars, some painted, many merely the trunks of poplars. Between the pillars hang by cords immense lanterns containing petroleum lamps. There are no walls. The sides are open to river and street. The floor is earth. On the side next the street is an iron railing with, perhaps, a few dusty shrubs beside it. The striped sofas, red, yellow, and blue, with wooden frames, are set out in lines. At the end of the café where you enter there is a ramshackle wooden building in which

are kept the pipes, the glasses, the coffee-cups, the coffee niche with its glowing embers, the dominoes, back-gammon-boards, and the gramophone, which occasionally sheds music that seems to proceed from the throats of husky dwarfs along the river-bank to gladden the hearts of men.

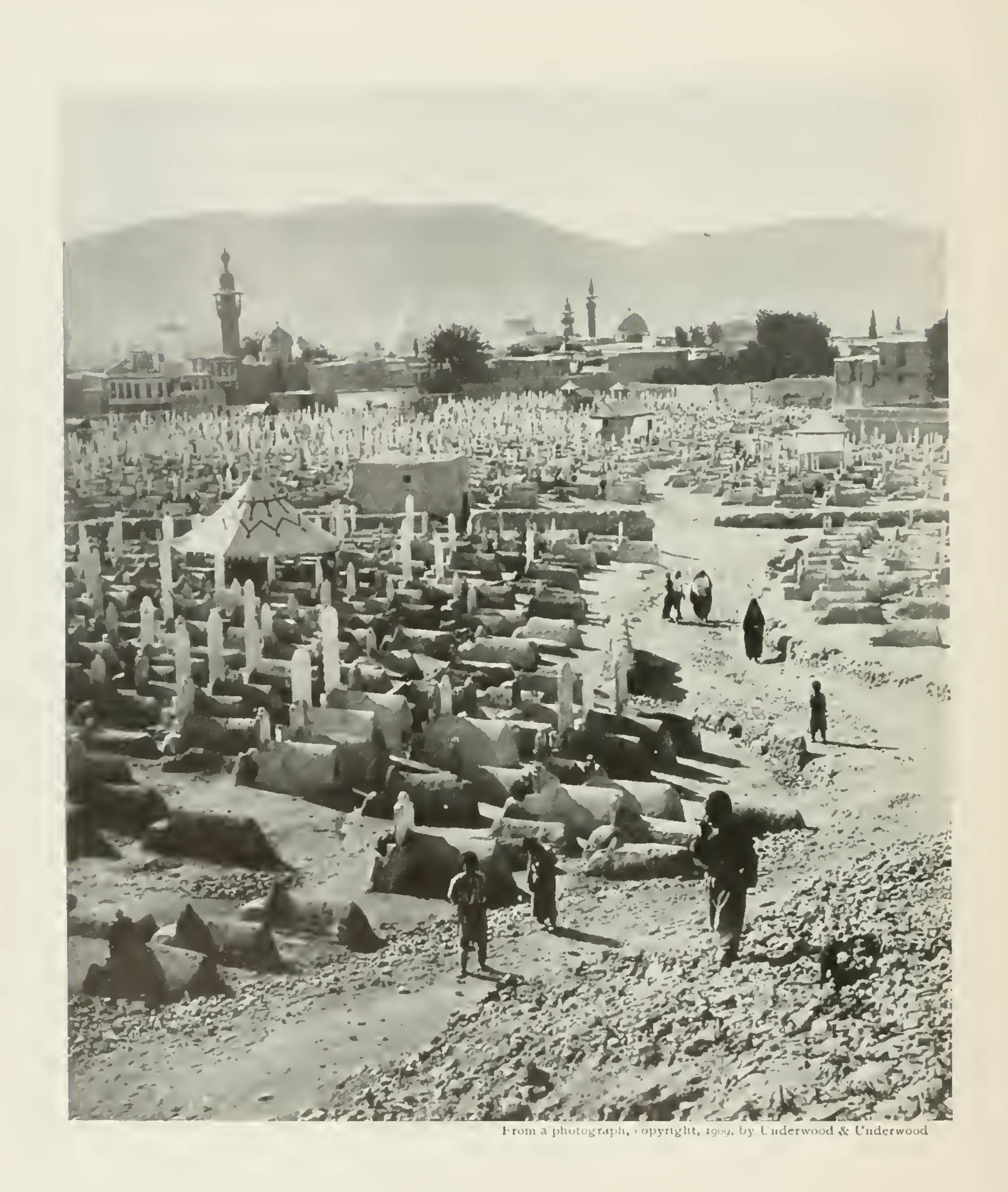
In all Eastern lands the mosques are the chosen dreaming-places of the devout, and Damascus contains about two hundred and forty-eight of them, headed by the great mosque which presides over the city much as St. Paul's Cathedral presides over London. To reach it one goes through the bazaars, passing many shops in which delicious-looking foods of all kinds are exposed for sale. In front of the butchers are sheep's heads, calves' heads, and joints deftly decorated with gold paper and scarlet anemones; the confectioners display trays of biscuits, soft cakes, and various kinds of wonderfully light pastry, sticky with honey and grape syrup: at the entrances of the numberless eating-houses are skewers stuck through balls of fried and larded meat, strips of fat lambs' tails, soups of splendid colors,—the coral-red soup beloved of the Eastern is to be seen on all sides,—and bowls full of savory messes, in which rice, *cous-cous* grain, red pepper, spices, fruit, mutton, and chicken mingle in a smooth and succulent mass. Ice-cream is being eagerly bought, and on many spotlessly clean counters are arranged charmingly shaped blue-and-white bowls of sour milk and curds, ornamented with patterns

of rich cream. Damascus must be the epicure's paradise. In no other town of East or West have I seen so many alluring displays of food. And butchers, bakers, and confectioners are artists, coquettishly clever in arranging their goods to tempt the most fastidious appetite. The little red anemone, be sure, is the badge of a subtle mind determined to take you captive.

THE GREAT MOSQUE

At the end of a row of bazaars is the very old and very fine principal gate of the Omayyade Mosque, the great mosque. It is sheeted with brass on which Arabic writing is graven. Just inside, under the high and huge porch, lies Mahmoud, known to every Damascene. Attired in an amazing, but really beautiful, arrangement of rags, in which almost every shade of blue and purple is represented, he is stretched prostrate upon a couch, with a multitude of slippers beside him. Without getting up, he ties on your pair, and then immediately relapses into what seems a state of coma. Over an old and rugged pavement, under arches of white plaster, and between pillars of blackened stone, I entered, noticing on my left, let into the wall, some marvelous blue, black, and purple Oriental tiles. Upon the right of the huge court lies the mosque, with its lead-cased "dome of the vulture," with its big columns, and immense, closed doors of light wood, arched and elaborately carved in their upper parts. The court, of course,





From a photograph, copyright, 1909, by Underwood & Underwood

MOHAMMEDAN CEMETERY, MINARETS, AND ANTI-LEBANON MOUNTAINS, DAMASCUS



contains a fountain for ablutions, protected by a sort of balcony of wood with wooden supports, and a lead-cased roof resting on low columns and arches. On the left side of the court is a long arcade with round arches, and at the far end there is also an arcade. The mosque has three minarets, one of which, the Medinet-el-Gharbiyeh, is beautiful. The other two are the Bride's Minaret, which I ascended, and the Minaret of Isa, or Jesus. The interior of the mosque, much of which was destroyed by fire about eleven years ago, is enormous. Upon the floor are stretched hundreds of small prayer-carpets, many of them beautiful, some gaudy and cheap-looking. Above the carved doors there is some hideous painted glass. The wooden roof, too, is singularly ugly, with much white and green painting. The walls on the right and at the ends are cased to a considerable height with marble. It is believed by many that the head of St. John the Baptist is buried in the eastern wing, and above this sacred place is a large erection of wood with a dome very fine in color, beetle-green being mingled with gold. Long trays for slippers lie near it. A tall grandfather's clock, tied to a column with cords, ticks not far off. A heathen temple, which was eventually transformed into a Christian church, called the Church of St. John, once stood here, and in the walls there are still to be found remains of these buildings, traces of Greek and Roman architecture.

On one occasion when I was in this mosque, I saw

an Arab carelessly perform a feat which seemed as natural to him as walking on a level road is to me. The marble that cases three of the interior walls rises perhaps twenty feet from the ground, and ends in a minute parapet, upon which a man can stand only with difficulty sidewise. There is no rail or support of any kind, and, above, the smooth walls rise to the roof. The Arab whom I saw was a cleaner, and with a long brush in his hand he was coolly promenading about upon this parapet doing his work. I saw him there for half an hour, and left him still in his apparently perilous position, his naked feet clinging sidewise to the marble while he used his brush vigorously both above and below him.

The exterior of the building is far more impressive than the interior, which is not interesting, but even the effect of the massive severity of much of the outer wall is marred by the frightful projecting roof, which, in its dress of pale-blue and green paint, looks almost incredibly tawdry and vulgar.

Near by is the famous tomb of Saladin, in finely carved marble, protected by a cupola and partly covered by a green pall. But here again vile taste wars against beauty. Masses of exquisite Oriental tiles line the walls of the tomb-house, but unfortunately only to a certain height, and above them the eyes are outraged by hideous stripes of offensive color. But in the little garden outside, where sits beneath a wooden porch the grave Moslem who guards the tomb, dreaming quietly in the





From a photograph by Henry Troth

BAZAARS, DAMASCUS



sunshine, there is a delicately exquisite charm, an inclosed and antique peace which nothing interferes with. Under the porch is a raised platform of stone, and here—of course upon a striped sofa—the guardian passes his quiet days, looking out over a tiny inclosure surrounded by the walls of houses with closely shuttered windows. Little paths, paved roughly with cobblestones, wind between tall green shrubs and rose-bushes. Plum-trees cast masses of shadow. They grow about a huge, oval basin of stone filled with water, in the center of which bubbles a fountain from a shallow cup. Climbing-roses and jasmine embrace the houses. A big, white arch spans the garden. At the far end, beyond the water, is a trellis.

Why is it so fascinating? Why will it be forever a delicious memory in my mind? I can scarcely tell. Two young Arab boys lean on the edge of the basin dreamily listening to the fountain, and casting sprays of jasmine upon the surface of the water. The guardian draws slowly at his narghile, as he squats on the sofa with his legs tucked under him. A blue pigeon flits under the white arch. The noise of the city, in the heart of which we are, does not penetrate to this place. We hear only the fountain. Who dwells in those shuttered houses, behind the fretwork of wood, behind the climbing-flowers? I shall never know. No voice drops down from them, no eyes peep out. We are in a hermitage, deep surely in old Damascus, where the feet of Abraham trod.

Another garden of Damascus which I can never forget, and to which I returned day after day, lies just outside the town on the bank of the Barada, and is the haunt of pilgrims returning from Mecca to their homes in distant parts of the world. It is inclosed by the mosque and Tekkiyeh, or Pilgrims' House, of Sultan Selim. Outside is a strong wall above which is a multitude of the close-set, cuplike cupolas which are so characteristic of Damascus, interspersed with little pointed towers. Some of the cupolas are large, some small. Behind them, set back from them, rises the mosque, with its squat, lead-covered dome and its two very graceful, yellow stone minarets. The mosque is uninteresting, but the garden at its foot, round which is built the Pilgrims' House, erected in the year 1516, is a bit of enchanted ground. Yet how can its enchantment be defined? The mosque is falling into decay, the Pilgrims' House is neglected, the garden is a wilderness. Old age broods over this place — the strange old age of the East that is like no other antiquity, romantic, fatalistic, and how wonderfully serene! Arched arcades, striped in crude colors, yellow, blue, and white, keep the sun from the rooms of the pilgrims. The interiors look rather like filthy stables, but over every door and every window there is a section of exquisite Oriental tiles, precious things set there to do honor to those who have made the long journey. The loveliness of these tiles is indescribable.



MINARETS AND ROOFS OF DAMASCUS

[illegible] of the Omayyad Mosque, since rebuilt. The arches [illegible] of extending across the picture marks the position of a covered street supposed to be referred to in Acts ix. 11: "Go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus."





No furniture is provided for the pilgrims. At night they lie in a muddle of garments and bundles on wooden platforms. By day they rest in the garden, under the hedges of roses. Never did I fully realize what must be the sweetness of rest after immense exertions and privations, after the weariness of the desert, and the dangers by the way, till I saw the Indian pilgrims reposing in this garden of Selim, watching the water bubbling in the great stone basin before the mosque. Near to them a pear-tree was a mass of snow-white blossom. Poplars with silver trunks trembled in the warm and scented breeze. Between the gray blocks of the pavement the herbage pushed. Everywhere was a wild, untutored tangle of rose-bushes. Here and there a fire burned in a brazier, and pilgrim cooks came and went, preparing mysterious meals. Children in long robes leaned on the raised stone coping of the fountain. Women crouched under the arcade of the mosque. Some Turkish soldiers from the barracks close by strolled in quietly, smoking cigarettes. Beneath a willow a man was praying. And the pilgrims from Samarkand listened to the sound of the bees and the murmur of the water; and some blossoms from the pear-tree, white as their souls were white after their prayers at the holy places, fell softly over them; and surely they thought of the deserts they had traversed, and gave glory to Allah and to his Prophet for bringing them into the earthly paradise, where the minarets look down into

the silver-green waters, and the red roses blow beside the doors of their sleeping-places.

Their grave eyes were full of solemnly happy dreams.

"PROTECTOR GENERAL OF THE HOLY CARPET"

In Damascus there dwells a man famous among the Moslems of Syria, Abdul-Rahman Pasha, Conductor Protector General of the Holy Carpet and of the Sacred Caravan of Syria on the annual journey to Mecca. He is also called the pasha of the hejâj. He was kind enough to invite me to pay him a visit. Egypt and Syria have each a holy carpet, but in Egypt the pasha of the hejâj, or pilgrims to Mecca, holds his office for one year only, whereas in Syria the post is hereditary, and is held year after year by the same man. This personage has a position of great dignity in Damascus, but he has to pay for it by journeying every year to Mecca and back. Formerly this was an exhausting undertaking, but now much of the journey can be made by train. When he leaves the train, the pasha steps into his carriage. But he enters the sacred city riding upon a milk-white horse and bareheaded and, save for a white burnoose, naked.

When I arrived at the entrance to his dwelling, which is in a side street close to an Arab bath, I was met by a handsome young Syrian, Elias Nimer, who told me that unexpectedly the pasha had been called away, and that he had been deputed to conduct me through three

or four of the principal rooms, and also the pasha's stables. He added, smiling, that his name meant tiger, but that he came from Nazareth and was not at all dangerous. As my admirable and very competent dragoman, Mr. Shukly Jamal of Jerusalem, has a name which signifies camel, I walked through the pasha's palace in pleasantly varied company. We visited first the summer saloon, which of course was on the ground floor, for the rich Damascenes occupy the upper stories of their houses in winter, but in the hot months live chiefly on the ground floor, and spend much time in the court-yards and near the fountains.

Passing across a long and rather narrow interior court, paved with pink volcanic stone, we came into a high room. The floor was covered with black and white marble. A delicious fountain bubbled up in a basin of yellow and white marble, above which was a little yellow lion with gaping jaws. Near it was a framed plaque, on which, in white lettering against black, were the Arabic words, "God has said, 'This is the day when truth is of much benefit to those that speak it.'" Another saying, in letters of ivory, proclaimed, "God is merciful to His people." Over a very graceful and lovely marble table hung a handsome gold and crystal chandelier, and the furniture was exquisite, inlaid with walnut, ivory, silver, and mother-of-pearl, and upholstered in gray and pale-yellow striped silk. The effect of this combination was extraordinarily cool and elegant. A

discordant color note was struck by the ugly painted ceiling, crude and garish, and strangely out of place, looking down on the delicate marble.

Up-stairs was a large, uninteresting dining-room, with an immense round table in the middle, on which were arranged, quite in European fashion, knives, forks, and napkins for sixteen people. Passing through a hall, I then came, between tiger and camel, into the pasha's official reception-room. This was a finely proportioned chamber, containing a quantity of furniture inlaid with silver and mother-of-pearl, and cushioned with yellow, black, and red silk. At the windows were striped silk curtains, and from the painted ceiling hung a really magnificent hammered brass chandelier, fitted with a multitude of electric lights, which Mr. Nimer politely turned on for my benefit. The floor was covered with a superb carpet from Persia. The false note in this room was supplied by a large, pink stove. Standing on tables were two pictures painted by a Syrian artist. One was large and displayed the sacred carpets of Egypt and Syria, in their respective palanquins of green and red, set upon camels and surrounded by white-robed pilgrims, approaching the round "mountain of sacrifice"; the other was a view of Mecca, with many mosques, and showed the "Holy Stone" covered with a black pall.

While I was looking at these pictures one of the pasha's eunuchs came from the harem to see me. He was a young negro, very tall, thin, shambling, and





From stereograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood

RETURN OF THE HOLY CARPET FROM MECCA



pathetic-looking, dressed in a pink shirt, black trousers, and a pepper-and-salt jacket and waistcoat. Standing sidewise to me, with his hands hanging, in a high voice he entered into conversation. He informed me that he had been taken when a child from his home in the Sudan and brought to Damascus, where now for twelve years he had been in the service of the pasha. After offering me a cigarette, he proceeded to show me his watch, a silver one, and his chain, which was of gold. He then told me, with an air of pride, that he received one Turkish pound a month for pocket-money, and was always well treated. I congratulated him, but he suddenly collapsed. His triumph faded, and, drooping his small head, he exclaimed in an almost shrill pipe:

"If I had a thousand pounds, I would give it all to return to my own country. I would give also my watch." He paused, then added, "and my chain."

"Can you remember your country?" I inquired.

The eunuch stared with his bulging eyes, and fingered the watch-chain that lay proudly across the pepper-and-salt waistcoat.

"No; but it is my country, and I wish to go back there."

And he bade me adieu plaintively, and shambled away to the pasha's harem.

After visiting the pasha's stables, in which I saw magnificent horses, with skins like golden satin, munching

barley that was piled up in round heaps almost as big as the mountain of sacrifice, I took my leave, and set out for a long and desultory stroll through the city.

THE ESSENCE OF THE CHARM

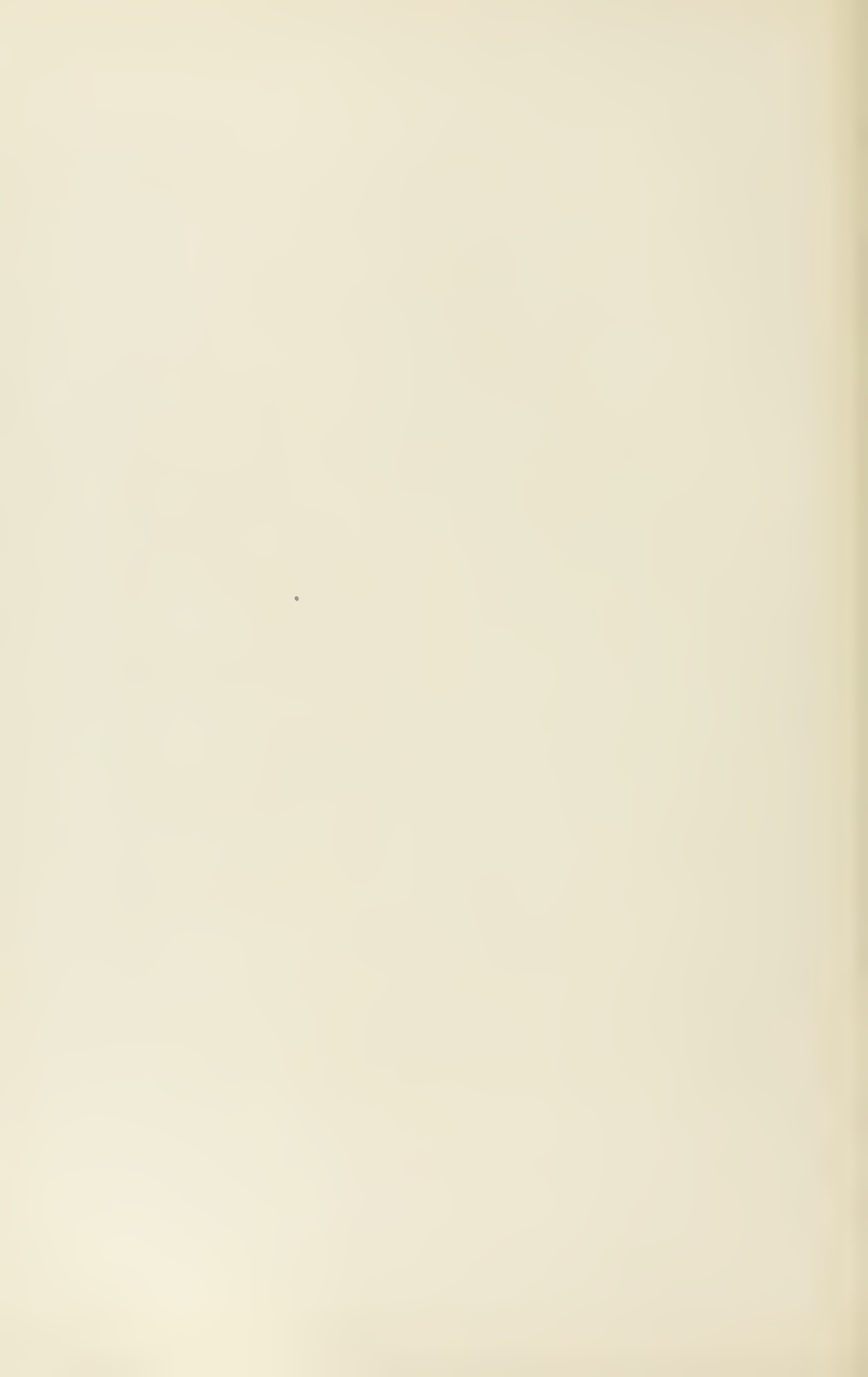
DAMASCUS is not a city of "sights," like Jerusalem. It is not famous for its antiquities, and there are not many things in it which one must see at whatever cost of fatigue or boredom. Nevertheless, or perhaps for this very reason, I never grew tired of wandering about it, of visiting the bazaars, the mosques, the baths, the gardens, the khans, the cafés, and even the tombs and the graveyards.

The bazaars are fine, and the shadowy khans, where the wholesale trade is carried on, are fascinating. In them one is away from the violent bustle of eager buyers and sellers. The light is soft. The murmur of a fountain is often audible. The dream of Damascus descends on the spirit. People are doing business, no doubt, yet the khans are places of dreams, are full of twilight romance. In the bath-houses immense, dark-red and brown cockroaches promenade over floors of exquisite marble, and an occasional rat bounds out from some favorite nook overshadowed by tight bouquets of flowers. Any protest against the presence of live stock is received by the bath attendants with amused surprise. One must therefore either resign oneself—and the cockroaches are deeply curious about strangers from the



OPEN BAZAARS OF DAMASCUS





West — or one must abruptly withdraw, and pass out into the sunlight, perhaps to the Meidan, to the city walls, or to some garden by a stream.

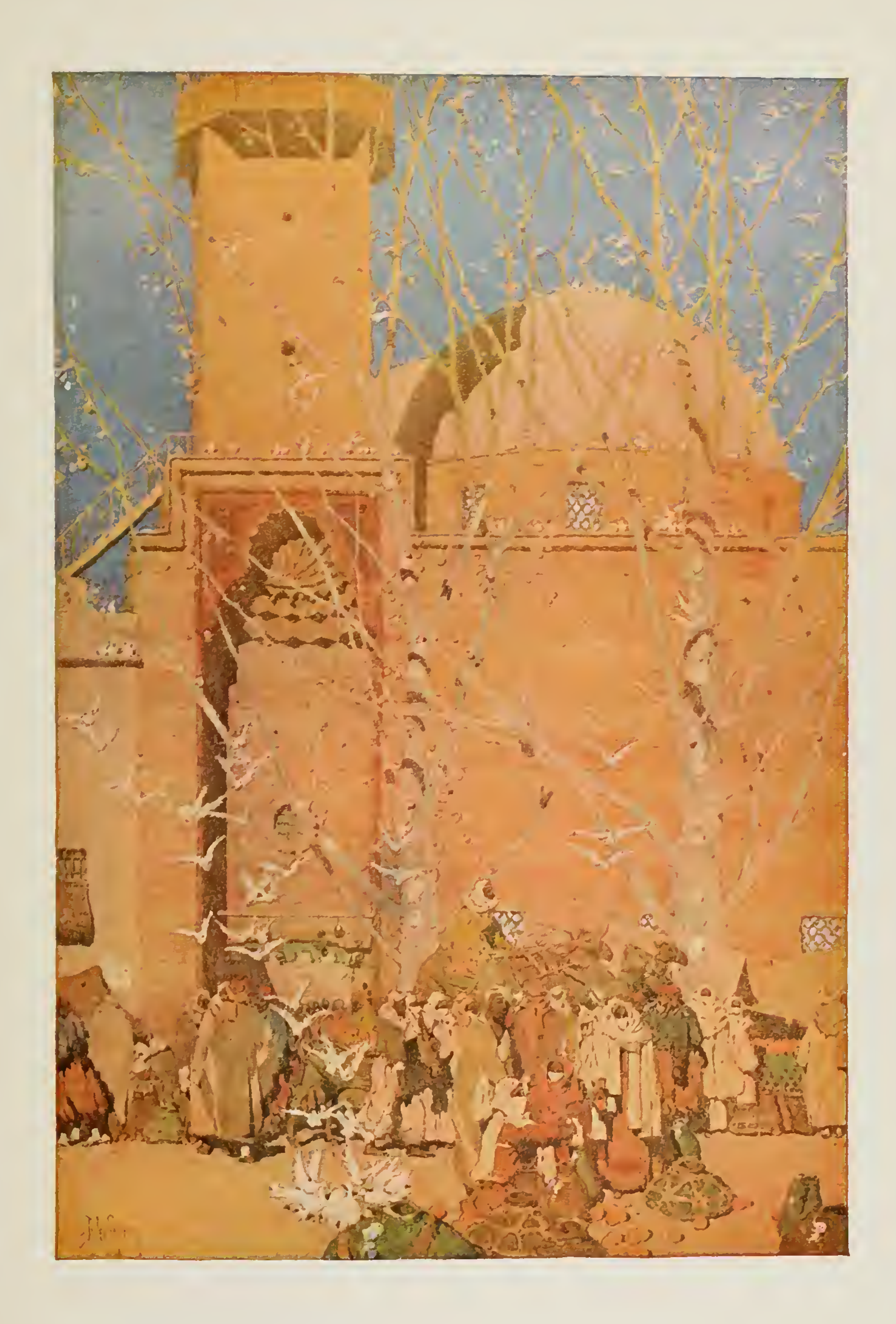
Although much of Damascus looks new and frail, the walls of the city have an appearance of hoary age. Beneath them are spread masses of dung, which, when thoroughly dried in the sun, is used as fuel. Above them sometimes fantastic and filthy-looking houses appear — houses that seem to grow out of them like some bulbous form of disease. Behind heavily grated windows the dark eyes of women peep down on the rare passers-by. Here and there decaying towers break up these walls, here and there trees show tufts of foliage. One small and solitary window, above which is a rough arch of brick and stone, is said to be the aperture from which St. Paul, at the time of his conversion near Damascus, descended in a basket. Near the Thomas Gate is the site of the house of Naaman, appropriately close to the present place of the lepers, whom I saw gathered about their well, and who extended their twisted and rotting hands to me for alms. The tomb of St. George, who is said to have helped St. Paul in his memorable escape, is not far off, and there may be seen, leaning against an upright stone, and surmounted by a pale-blue wooden pagoda, from which hangs a lamp, a representation of the saint, on a white horse, slaying a green dragon with scarlet jaws. This fiery picture is discreetly framed in white muslin.

The so-called house of Ananias, which is one of the few "sights," is now a subterranean chapel, small and remarkably ugly. It has two altars, and belongs to the Latins, who celebrate mass in it every Thursday. The floor is of stone, the diseased-looking roof is stained with patches of blue and white. A few wooden benches stand before the altars. A chapel on this site is said to have been the first chapel used for Christian worship. One day, as I was leaving it and mounting to earth, some very well-dressed female worshipers—no doubt Syrian Christians—emerged from their devotions, rose abruptly from their knees, fluttered after me, and held out beringed fingers, desiring to "see my money." But very few requests of this kind fell upon my ears in Damascus, where I was usually ignored or treated with grave politeness. And so there was nothing to disturb for me the strange charm of the City of Minarets, the City of Rushing Waters. I grew to love the place. It cast upon me a spell. I long to return there.

One night I visited the wooden theater. I sat in a box. Upon the stage was given in Arabic a representation of "The Prisoners of the Bastille," preceded by a hymn in praise of—Abdul-Hamid! But I looked generally at the audience. Among the young dandies, the merchants, the Jews, there sat a Bedouin boy, a little apart. I am certain this was his first visit to civilization. He was clad in party-colored rags, full of lovely shades of blue and purple. On his head was the



THE MARKET-PLACE, DAMASCUS





keffieh. He gazed with his desert eyes at the Jewish actresses, at the boxes, at the people about him. Between the acts a boy carried about a tray covered with small dishes of nuts, melon-seeds, oranges. "Oh! my uncles," he cried, "occupy your time! Occupy your time, my uncles! Occupy your time!"

The Bedouin uncle responded to the call. He ate from every dish, paying with coins which he disinterred from his enchanting rags. The play proceeded. He stared, violently cracked his nuts, spat out the shells among his neighbors, devoured his melon-seeds. Never did his expression change. Yet no one in that place was so marvelously expressive as he was. The desert was in his attitude. The desert gazed out of his eyes, which till now had always looked on the limitless spaces, on the trembling mirage, and on the shining gold of the sands.

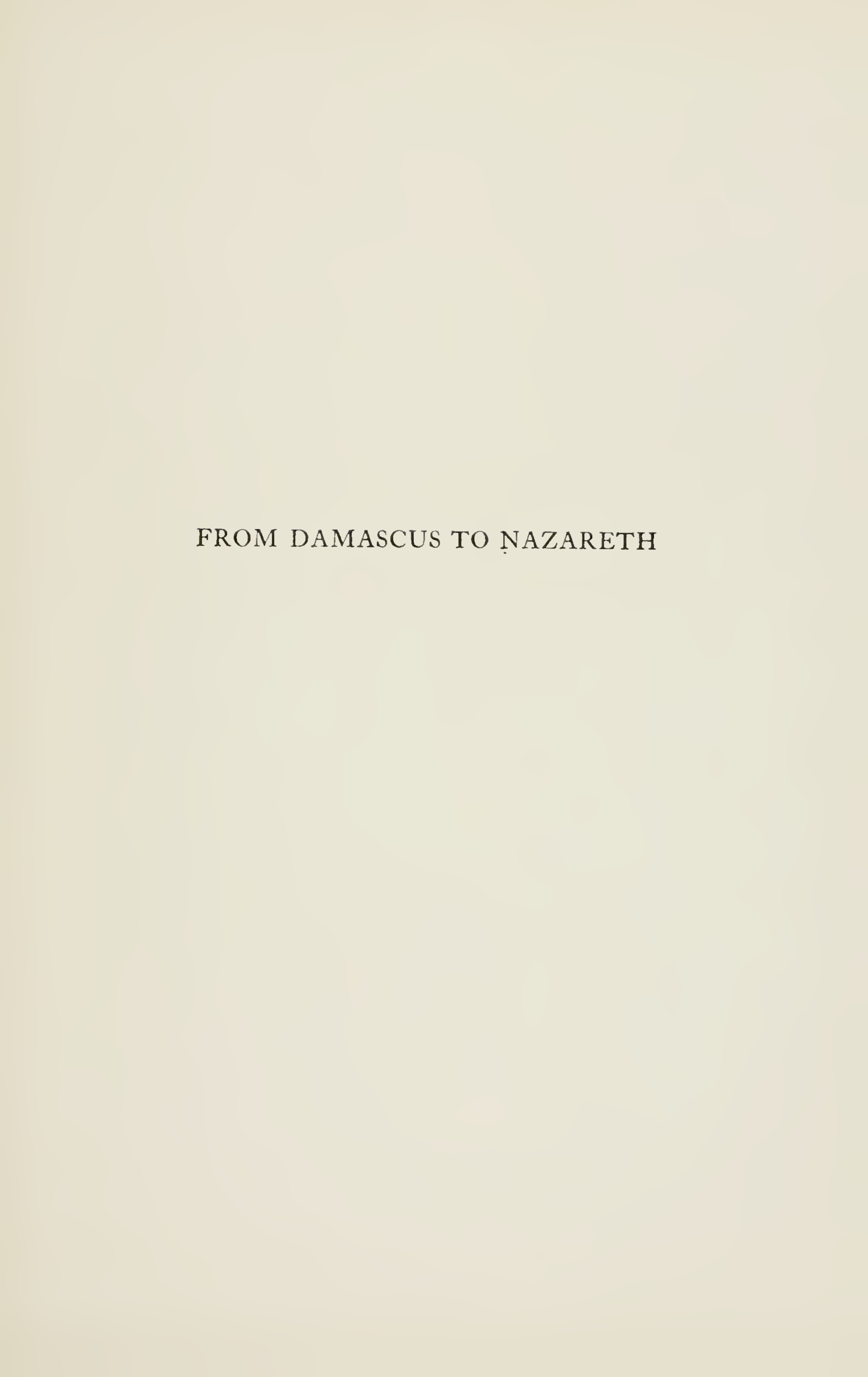
As I watched him, I knew the essence of the wonderful charm of Damascus. It is a garden city touched by the great desert. Under its roses one feels the sands. Beside its trembling waters one dreams of the trembling mirage. The cry of its muezzins seems to echo from its mosque towers to that most wonderful thing in nature which is "God without man." The breath of the wastes passes among the poplars as that Bedouin boy passed among the merchants when he came and when he went. In Damascus one hears the two voices. And when one looks from the sacred mountain upon

that city of dream, cradled among the woods, one sees far off the tawny beginnings of that other magic, which looks out from the Bedouin's eyes. And though, perhaps, with the pilgrims from Samarkand, one loves to rest beside the fountains under the hedges of roses, one is aware of the other love, intercourse with which has made Damascus an earthly paradise for them and for you.

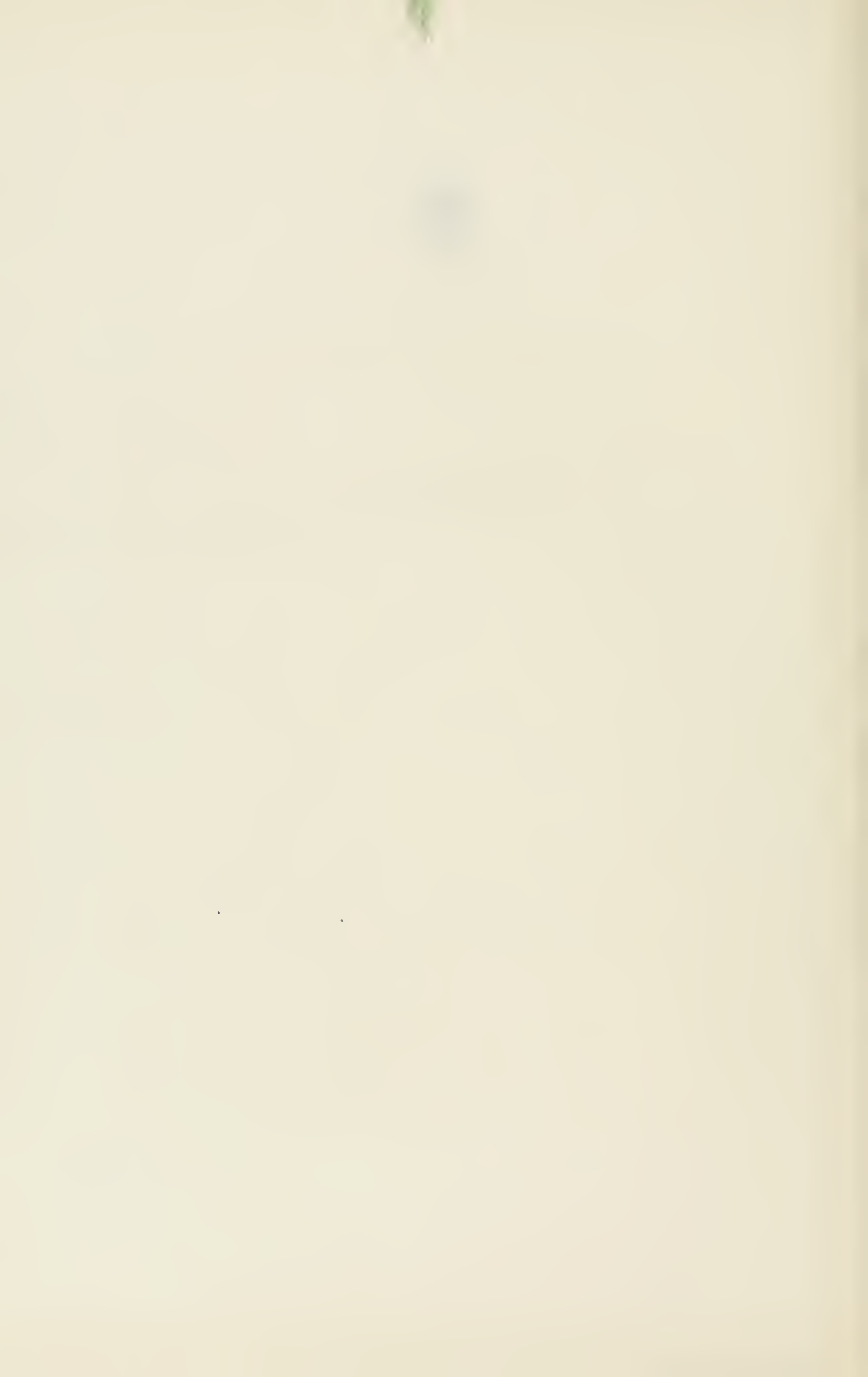
And one knows why Damascus has a spell. It is the city of shade, of waters, of marble minarets, and of roses. But it is also the great city of the desert.

From the sacred mountain it looks like an exquisite mirage, and it is near to the mirage.

Its spell is the spell of the desert and the spell of the oasis.



FROM DAMASCUS TO NAZARETH



III

FROM DAMASCUS TO NAZARETH

TO see the Holy Land as it ought to be seen, one must ride through it, and the journey should be taken, if possible, in spring. Many travelers enter at Jaffa, go by train to Jerusalem, then camp from Jerusalem to Damascus, and leave Syria by way of Beirut. I preferred to enter at Beirut, and to camp from Damascus to Jerusalem, making Jerusalem the finale of my journey. There is something to be said for both arrangements. Damascus is far more beautiful than Jerusalem; so if you wish to end in beauty, you must not follow my example. But Jerusalem is to most people far more interesting than Damascus, and at Easter-time, when I was there, is perhaps the most interesting city in the world. My journey, therefore, was undoubtedly a crescendo, and it closed with a magnificent climax. For the benefit of others who may in the future wish to go over this ground, I will state some particulars of the camping facilities in Palestine, and will give a list of my halting-places, with the approximate times of my arrivals and departures, from day to day.

All the arrangements for my tour, which were extremely satisfactory, were made with local agents of Jerusalem. I paid for everything at the rate of fifteen dollars a day. The camp was sent from Jerusalem, and met me at the first halting-place, Kafr Hawar. I had an excellent tent, a first-rate cook, and a good horse to ride. My dragoman, the Kurd who had charge of the animals and who acted as guide, and the cook, also rode horses. The two attendants were mounted on mules, and mules carried the baggage. Horses were sent from Kafr Hawar to the outskirts of Damascus for the first day's ride.

I left Damascus early on March 28, and was at Kafr Hawar between three and four in the afternoon. On the second night I slept at Banias, close to the sources of the Jordan; on the third at the Jewish village of Jauneh; on the fourth near Tiberias, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee; on the fifth and sixth at Nazareth; on the seventh at Jenin; on the eighth at Nablus; on the ninth at Sinjil. The tenth night was my first night in Jerusalem. On the second day of my journey I rode from seven in the morning till six at night, but rested in the middle of the day for nearly an hour and a half at the house of a Druse. On the third day I was in the saddle from seven-thirty till six, on the fourth from seven till ten in the morning, on the fifth from six-thirty till between three and four, on the seventh from seven till half-past two, on the eighth from seven till four-fif-





From a photograph by Henry Troth

BEDOUIN ENCAMPMENT IN THE DESERT



teen, on the ninth from seven till three, and on the tenth, the last, from about six-thirty till early in the afternoon. A halt was made each day for lunch, but we seldom allowed ourselves as much as an hour for that meal. On the sixth day I rode from Nazareth to the top of Mount Tabor. If I ever make this journey again, I shall arrange to spend at least three nights on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which is, in my opinion, far more beautiful, touching, and in every way attractive than Nazareth. One has to part with some illusions in Palestine; but, on the other hand, one can there gather in some impressions which will not easily fade from the mind. The castle above Cæsarea Philippi, the plain between Cæsarea Philippi and Ja-uneh, Tiberias, Jericho, the wilderness of Judea, the Dead Sea, the view of the mountains of Moab from its shore — who that has once seen these in the spring can forget them, can ever regret any journey, however fatiguing, which closed in the land which held them in its bosom?

The first day's ride was a delightful experience. The weather was radiant. Damascus faded away from me into the blue, like an Oriental vision too lovely to last, as we rode toward the snowy range of the Anti-Libanus, dominated by the giant Mount Hermon. Our route lay over gently undulating, happy, and strangely serene-looking country. We passed slowly stepping camels laden with willow wood, threaded a grove of glorious old olives, and at length came out from the cloud of

green that seems to float about the city of Abraham. The way was treeless now, and still gently undulating. Prairies of young, growing corn stretched away to right and left. Here and there were the one-story houses of natives. In my ears, instead of the ceaseless murmur of waters, was the exultant song of the larks. To my nostrils there rose up the smell of the beans. It was as if the spring lifted hypnotic hands and suggested forgetfulness to my subjective mind. Yet I often turned to look back, and only when at last, far, far away at the edge of the desert, my reluctant eyes could see nothing but a mystery of indigo, did I think of the Breton boy, and his desire and my own, and set my face resolutely toward the mountains and the long way to the Holy Places.

On that first day spring would not be denied. It was full of promises, telling me it would be with me, showering soft airs, sun-rays, music of birds, odors, ethereal colors, till I should see the stony hills of Jerusalem; and I believed it—till the morrow. For at Kafr Hawar the camp was set near a rushing stream, on a lawn, in front of a grove of yellow-green poplars, in a cup of calm hills. And the song of the birds ceased only when night fell and the sun went down in a sky like a huge turquoise. And Syrian children, robed in dull-blue and exquisite, dim rose color,—rags of genius,—danced about the camp-fire like little harbingers of good fortune. That next day! We plunged into winter.



TIBERIAS AND THE SEA OF GALILEE





PROBABLE NORTHERN LIMIT OF CHRIST'S JOURNEYINGS

Our destination, Banias,—in old days Cæsarea Philippi, in older days still Paneas, a famous sanctuary of Pan, and the site of a temple built by Herod the Great to Augustus,—lies at the base of the southern slopes of Mount Hermon, which rises to a height of nearly eight thousand feet above it. There are the sources of the Jordan, and there the traveler from Damascus reaches the probable limit of Christ's journeyings northward. To gain this retreat we had to ride high into the mountains, near to the snow-fields of Hermon, which looked ghostly on our right, and over masses of volcanic rock, sometimes interspersed with bushes of hardy myrtle. Heavy rain came on almost as soon as we started, and presently an icy gale was blowing full in our faces. We had gone from a spring more radiant than many a Western summer into winter. Absolute desolation surrounded us; the breath of the snows chilled us almost to the bone; the stumbling horses made their way with difficulty over the loose stones and the perforated rocks. I felt as if I had been placed on a magic carpet by a malign jinn, and transported suddenly to some terrible Northern land. Toward noon we reached a high plateau, the haunt of bears, and came upon the first Druse village I had seen, huddled in terraces among the inhospitable rocks.

The members of this still mysterious religion love rather than fear desolate places, and hold themselves strictly apart; but they are not inhospitable to travelers, and I was admitted into a house to rest for a little while, and to gain shelter against the raging storm. My host was a tall, very handsome man, well dressed in a beautiful combination of blues and reds, with a snow-white turban bound about a tarboosh from which the tassel was missing. The tarboosh without the tassel marks the Druse. The house was built of yellow stone, and the floor of the good-sized, spotlessly clean room was of pale-yellow earth, which looked as if it had been freshly dug up, raked, and gently smoothed. There was no furniture. The roof was of wood. In a recess lay a large pile of carefully folded rugs. One was spread for us, and we ate, sitting on the ground. The atmosphere was deliciously warm and cozy. My host, who stayed gravely beside me, standing while I reposed, was apparently one of the Ulema, or "initiated" Druses, for he informed me that he never smoked and never drank coffee. The Juhaleh, or "uninitiated," do both.

After paying for our entertainment, we remounted, and pursued our way in wind and rain over the haunt of bears. And now one of the surprises of this region came upon us. Leaving Hermon on our right, we descended toward the Jordan, and suddenly entered into summer. The wind fell, the rain ceased, the sky smiled on us, the sun shone out. Flowers were about our

horses' feet. Far down below us stretched the deliciously fertile plain of the Huleh, a land of milk and honey, where the black buffaloes wallow in oceans of gold-colored blossoms. And on a hill towering over it, above the ancient sanctuary of the great god Pan, were the ruins of the castle of Kalat es-Subeibeh, once perhaps the most glorious stronghold in Syria. My heart leaped at the wide splendor of this view as we rode down the rocky paths, passing more villages of Druses, from which men in blues and reds, with painted eyes, came out to stare at us, and women, many of them beautiful, tall, slender, with aristocratic features full of race, gazed at us over the low stone walls.

Although the horses were tired, and we had had a hard day, I resolved to make the wide detour which was necessary if we were to see the castle. This involved another climb over ground so steep that we were obliged to dismount and lead our horses. But we were rewarded for our exertions by one of the most magnificent views I have ever seen, bounded, far away, by the pale-blue mountains of Palestine. Leaning on a wall that overlooked a sheer precipice of a thousand feet, I gazed at the mountains of Bashan, the mountains of Galilee, the mighty slopes and crests of Hermon, at the rocky defiles, the Druse villages, the groves of olives, the vast plain stretching to that lake which many authorities have identified with the waters of Merom, where Joshua fought with Jabin, King of Hazor. Others, among

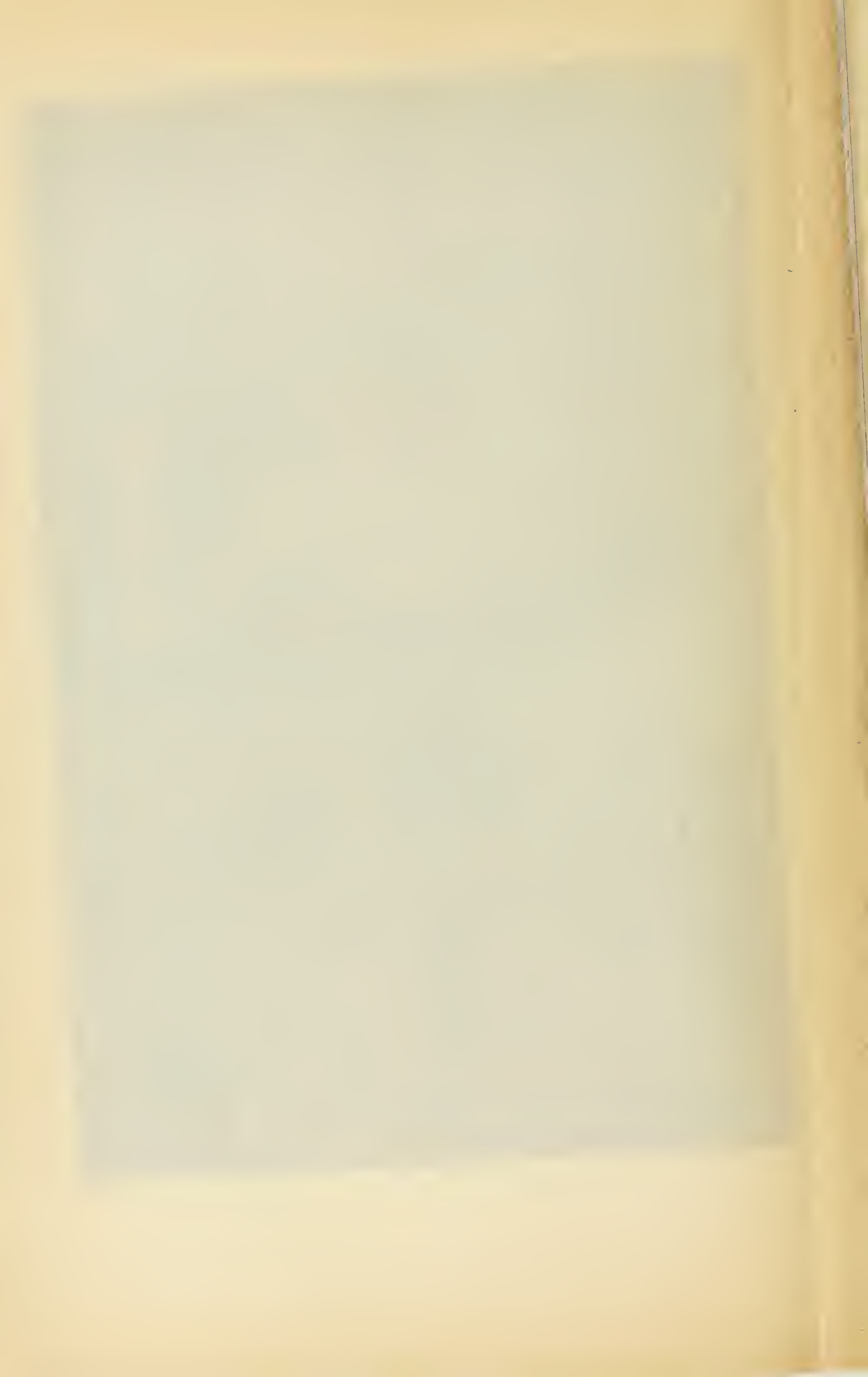
them Grove, are of a different opinion. That day I was untroubled by tradition, by conflicts of learning. It was enough for me that from this aery of the Franks, dating from the twelfth century, I gazed on the Promised Land.

That night I slept in a pastoral paradise, and for me the old gods lived again. Was it wrong? I could not blame myself. The spirit of Pan still lingers among the tangled undergrowth, the oaks, the olives, the rank herbage, and the wild flowers that gather about the sparkling waters of Jordan, cool, clear, and touched with a gleam of silver as they leap from the orange cliff where the great god was worshiped, and propitiated with sacrifices, in the days that are a legend, but that still stir the imaginations of men. And late in the night I sat alone, and looked at the evening star shining above the precipice, and listened to the delicate cry of the sacred river starting on its way to the place where the Russian pilgrims enter it to be cleansed of their many sins. And though I remembered that perhaps there, by the rock from which the sweet waters rise to give life to the land, were said the words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," I still heard in the night, as if from far off, that rustic music which is as the soul of grasses and trees, of rocks and hills and rivers. Somewhere, in some hidden place among the gnarled trunks of the olives, surely the son of Mercury and the dryad was piping unabashed. Toward dawn heavy rain pat-





THE HOUSETOPS OF NAZARETH



tered on the roof of my tent, and odors rose from the soaked herbage. And still above the rain I heard the voice of the syrinx, and in the darkness I smelled the perfumes of Pan.

THE JOYS OF SPRING IN PALESTINE

In the morning the thick grass about the tent door was drenched, and from the earth there mounted a light mist to the crested olives. We started early, crossed the stream, and came into the land of milk and honey. That day all that I had ever heard of the joys of the spring in Palestine came back to my memory, and I rejoiced in truth. Till near the end of our journey we rode through the immense and languid plain, bathed in the rays of the sun, treading among flowers, and resting our eyes on great stretches of green and yellow. The wild mustard lit up our way with its tiny blossoms, the red anemone and the red poppy lifted their cups toward the oleanders, the olives, the wild oaks, as if calling a toast to the spring. Far off, looking, in their ocean of gold-colored flowers, like great patches of black velvet, the herds of buffaloes voluptuously dreamed, and the wild duck, flying low, trailed over the hidden swamps where they breed by thousands. There was in the scene a rank richness that seemed to lie upon the senses like a weight as mile after mile was covered. A dream came down on the horsemen. Pan piped no more. Surely he was sleeping under an oak by some hidden and sluggishly

flowing stream, and red and yellow flowers were crowding about his hairy form, and were hiding the syrinx, which had dropped from his tired hand.

At noon I rested under a walnut, and there came to gaze upon me a Bedouin youth called Musa Mustafa. He watched me, leaned on his old matchlock, and presently began to smile and grow friendly. When I drank he said: "That is lion's milk. I drink water." He was told that I was English, and he asked many questions about England, about the houses, the servants. When I told him that in England blond female servants waited upon me, he said, "I wish to live in England." I looked at his gun, said I had only fifteen minutes more to give to repose, and that I should like to carry away a wild duck. Without a word he vanished in the direction of the golden swamps. Watch in hand, I waited. Ten minutes passed, then I heard a dull report; five minutes later the boy reappeared, holding a fat duck toward me. And so, with the gain of a duck and the loss of some coins, I took leave of Musa Mustafa, and left him leaning on his gun and gazing after me as I rode away into the great world that he will never see.

A COLONY OF GERMAN AND POLISH JEWS

Toward evening we came to a definite road running straight between tall ranges of eucalyptus-trees. Behind them were plantations of almond- and fruit-trees symmetrically arranged, and carefully tended vineyards.



THE RIVER JORDAN, NEAR ITS SOURCE



From a photograph, copyright, 1910, by Underwood & Underwood



In the gold of the evening, flocks of shaggy sheep, herds of small bullocks and goats, were being driven home by fair men, with pale faces, weak eyes, and noses of mark, whose long-haired heads were crowned by hideous hats of soft and dusty felt. We turned to the right, climbed a steep road covered with enormous, firmly fixed stones, passed through an avenue of cypresses, and came into one of those strange little worlds which are scattered about Palestine—a "colony." This colony was of foreign Jews, Polish and German. The well-built stone houses, many of them with little gardens, were alined on each side of a street rising in steps up the mountain, and as I stood upon the small, grassy terrace—almost like a natural balcony jutting out over an immense view which embraced Lake Huleh, with its papyrus-covered northern shore—on which the camp was pitched, I heard behind me a chorus of Jewish voices lifted in what seemed an antique evening hymn. The hymn persisted. Up from the plain pattered the flocks and herds. Mares, attended by prancing foals, went by. I heard the baaing of sheep, the lowing of cattle. Dogs barked. Yes, this was a "home"—a home bathed in the pure air from the mountains. Lights shone from the windows. Jewish mothers were putting their children to bed—little Palestine Jews and Jewesses who knew not the lands of their parents. In the darkness the hymn sounded older, full of the pathos—yet full, too, of the strange determination—of the wander-

ing nation that denies and is so often denied. And I thought of the "songs of Zion," and I thought of the strange land. Here at least they could sing, strangers though they were. That night I heard no note of the syrinx. The great god was left behind.

BY THE SEA OF GALILEE

NEXT day we rode down to the Sea of Galilee. Nothing else in Palestine touched me so much, nothing else seemed to me so intimately to retain the fragrance of the most beautiful spirit our world has known, as Galilee and its shores. As I rode slowly down to it over the hills covered with wild flowers and plants and grasses that lifted themselves almost to the knees of the horses, I felt at last, "This is indeed the Holy Land" — the land dreamed of by the Russian pilgrim in the icy North, and by the little Breton boy on the sun-scorched African upland; the land toward which hearts turn from the uttermost parts of the earth, the unique land of promise and of fulfilment. The gesture of the Breton boy came back to my mind as he said, "I shall see the Holy Land." Surely in a mystic dream he had looked on Galilee. On those quiet waters far below me, as still as glass, green, hedged about by thickets of wild oleander and by myriads of unknown flowers, the miraculous feet had walked. It was as if the touch of those feet had given to them peace forever — that marvelous peace at which I now was gazing.





From a photograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood

TIBERIAS, ON THE SEA OF GALILEE



Yes, this was the country of Jesus; and for me at that moment all the old gods were dead.

The calm of Galilee on a perfect morning of spring is like no other calm I have ever known. It is gentler, sweeter than the wonderful calm of the desert. There you seem to be coming into the very presence of God the Father. As you draw near to Galilee, it is as if, with the handful of humble fishermen, you drew near to God the Son. Galilee takes your hand as a friend, and draws you to it. It seems to breathe upon you and give you peace.

In a famous book, before going to Galilee, I read: "The scenery around is destitute of grandeur, beauty, and variety. The shores are singularly uniform . . . all around the sea silence and desolation reign."

How untrue! Everywhere there is beauty: in the oval sea, with its deep-green, dreaming waters; in the dreaming, flowery shores, where the pink blossoms of the oleanders lean toward Jordan's entering wave; in the long, green lawns with wine-colored patches that slope gently away behind the three snowy cupolas and the cypress-trees that mark the probable site of Capernaum; in the steep slopes of Gadara, gashed with livid yellow and white; in the low line of shore, like a line of paint in a tender picture, where once dwelt a woman who was forgiven, Mary Magdalene; in the flat-topped Mountain of the Beatitudes, set back between two nearer hills, where green shades into brown. Galilee is all

beauty—touching, exquisite beauty. It looks hallowed. And is it not forever hallowed? All I had dreamed of it was to me, and how much more!

"Around the sea silence and desolation reign." No; silence and peace, the sweetest, most delicate peace, not desolation, reign.

Pulling up our horses knee-deep in flowers, we looked long at this haven where we would be. And when at last we rode on, we seemed sinking into the very bosom of a peace passing understanding. Often my eyes turned to where Mary Magdalene had lived. And all these coasts and all these motionless waters seemed waters and coasts of forgiveness. And from every hill surely there floated the words, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

As we descended, the vegetation grew more luxuriant. We moved through a sort of jungle of flowers and subtropical vegetation, toward the motionless green waters, above which there was a sparkle, as if millions of minute golden fragments were quivering ceaselessly. Heat took us—a still, soft heat that was as soothing as a quiet embrace. And the wonderful, the happy peace deepened about us, effortless, irresistible. Now, away to the right, close to the water, I saw a habitation, a small gray monastery, with a tiny garden planted with cypresses. I heard the voice of a stream, hidden in flowers. Masses of rushes lifted their slender heads above the wild mustard blossoms; beyond them lay a fisherman's white

boat; a tiny wreath of smoke curled up. And now, almost smothered in flowers and rushes, we came upon a hut of papyrus under which squatted two swarthy, brown-skinned men, clad in red and blue, with caps of camels'-hair, holding red rosaries,—"the idleness tool," as the Syrians call it,—and smoking cigarettes as they gazed with heavy eyes at the motionless flowers, the motionless rushes, the motionless waters, themselves, like statues, motionless. So we came upon men of Galilee.

WHERE CHRIST TAUGHT AT CAPERNAUM

It was ten o'clock. We dismounted; the Kurd took charge of the horses, and started on the ride to Tiberias, while we embarked to visit Capernaum.

Through the lustrous heat, over green water that looked almost like satin, we glided toward the little white cupolas and the cypresses that mark what was once the "city of consolation," or Christ's "own city"; where he taught, where Simon Peter and Andrew dwelt, where were wrought the miracles on the centurion's servant and on the man with an unclean spirit, and where "in the house" Christ set a child in the midst of the disciples and said, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me."

Tel Hum is now the name given to this place. The full heat of noon was descending upon it as we drew near; the three cupolas looked almost dazzling in the gold. It seemed that they were Capernaum; but when

we were close, I saw a little orchard, two or three low buildings of volcanic stone, a wall by the water, and a Franciscan monk in brown and a great white helmet pacing slowly up and down under some eucalyptus-trees.

The father was German, but he could speak Italian, and in that language he told me that he lived there quite alone, with some dogs, to look after the excavations. He showed me the black and white ruins, and took special pride in the remains of a large building which he said was almost certainly the synagogue in which Christ taught. When I was leaving I asked him if he was not terribly lonely. "No," he replied; "on the hill not far off there is an Italian colony of six families. They are making a village, and many more are coming from the province of Pisa to join them. They grow vines, they farm, and they are very happy here."

From Pisa to Palestine! As I rowed away toward Tiberias I saw two of these Italians, protected by white umbrellas, strolling through the masses of flowers along the shore. So peace calls even to far Italy.

That day I had a cup of tea on the terrace of the Greek orthodox monastery at Tiberias, with Father Afranios, an Archimandrite. All along the water Jews from the village were descending to bathe. The doctor of the Scotch mission, with a plaid shawl over his shoulder and a white umbrella, went by with two ladies to his boat for a water excursion. Behind me clustered





TIBERIAS AND THE SEA OF GALILEE



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the village, with its small bazaars, its buildings of black basalt, its ruined walls. Before me stretched the still, unruffled waters, now shot with a myriad pale and delicate colors — pinks, soft greens, dim yellows, hues of mother-of-pearl.

Presently I rode out along the shore to the camp, which was pitched not far from the famous baths on a sort of green common dotted with bushes and rocks.

The carriage-road to the baths lay in front, at the edge of the sea; behind were the hills beyond which was Nazareth.

Nearly always on the road thin, pale, weak-eyed, shrunken Jews, with long side-locks of greasy hair, and fur and velvet hats, went by to the baths; and I thought of Pilate, the "weary official" of the cynical French story, being stopped in his litter by the young man who longed to know what Jesus of Nazareth had been like when he came before his judge. Women shrouded in black passed, crammed together in wretched carriages. Now and again the quick tripping of a horse was audible, and a Bedouin appeared, erect, hooded, impassive, with his long gun slung over his shoulder. On the road before the bath-house, near the synagogue of the Sephardim and the tomb of Rabbi Meir, women patients lay stretched on mattresses under heaps of blankets. Near them was a boy with bandaged eyes.

The evening softly fell over Galilee and its mountains. A little breeze sprang up, and for an hour ruffled the

waters, which turned to a steely blue. Then the marvelous calm returned, and the shores, unspoiled by the habitations of men except where the village of Tiberias lies at the foot of the way to Jerusalem, and the jungles of bushes and grasses and flowers, and the immense slopes of the far-away hills, like vast lawns spread out for all the weary and heavy-laden to rest on, melted away into the kindly night, and Galilee slept, like one protected.

THE APPROACH TO NAZARETH

There is a carriage-road from Tiberias to Nazareth, but we avoided it, and mounted upward among the corn-fields, where women were pulling up the weeds and tying them into bundles to be used as fodder, and the fellahs were plowing with the rather elaborate, but primitive-looking, wooden instruments in six parts which are yoked to a couple of oxen. Children, who might well be described in the words of the Arab proverb as clever chickens who crow in the egg, called after us lustily. Flies buzzed about us; quantities of larks were singing; sometimes a camel passed. We met some Circassians, in tall fur caps, riding, on thin, spirited horses, toward a Circassian colony not far off. We met, too, a caravan of European travelers going down to Tiberias with a music of joyously clanging bells. As they vanished behind a grove of olives, we came to Cana of Galilee, among the rounded and stony hills characteristic

of Palestine, with splendid olives, prickly pears, and its famous pomegranates about it, above a basin of cultivated ground. Here we had left the Jews and come to a village of Syrian Christians, with a few Moslems. Most of the Christians belong to the Greek church, but the Franciscans have a school and a church. In the chapel of the Greeks are certain stone jars said to have been used at the feast where Christ turned the water into wine, and the site of the house of Nathanael is eagerly shown. The village is small, dusty, stony, and crowded with children and flies. From a stone monastery, shadeless and unattractive, a German priest with a scarlet face stared at us, leaning fat arms on his window-sill. A clamor for money pursued us down the hillside. That afternoon, from the summit of Jebel es-Sikh, I looked down on Nazareth, how eagerly, how almost anxiously!

I saw below me a sort of cup of gentle hills, and upon a rather steep slope that curved toward me a gay, clean-looking, eminently urbane, and almost complacently respectable town, or large village, facing a scattered grove of olives and other trees. It looked as neat as a new pin. The houses were white, yellow, gray, with red roofs and, many of them, with blue shutters to the windows, solidly built of stone, surely as comfortable within as they were spick and span without. Among them, dominant, almost aggressive, like an immense hotel, stood up the Russian hospice. Beyond, in the

distance, lay the great plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel, full of historic sites,—Endor, Nain, Gilboa, Megiddo,—the mountains of Bashan, and a strange and apparently artificial excrescence, like an immense mound covered with low shrubs. This last was Mount Tabor. The view was fine, but I scarcely noticed it; I was intent on the smart little town at my feet. It must surely be a cheerful, habitable place. It was bathed in sunshine, in breezes from the hills; it suggested middle-class comfort, decent incomes, placid, companionable people leading unemotional, self-satisfied lives.

THE ABSENCE OF ORIENTAL QUALITY AT NAZARETH

And this was Nazareth! How un-Oriental, how almost German-Swiss, it seemed to me at that moment! I rode down into it. My first impression remained. We camped on a bit of waste ground that looked suburban, close to the Russian monstrosity, and at once I set out to see the famous Mary's well, which was scarcely a stone's throw away. There is very little doubt that this is the actual source from which the Virgin Mother drew water for the household purposes, and that our Lord must often have stood there. These facts must forever make it a place of pilgrimage; but it has little picturesque charm. The site is not pretty; indeed, it is almost squalid. It is in the town, and in rather a dingy, unattractive quarter, low down, without brightness, yet without any compensating remoteness or atmosphere of





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MAGDALA, ON THE SEA OF GALILEE



antiquity. About it, however, gather the very handsome women of Nazareth, tall, regular of feature, graceful, and wearing their long and simple garments of white and colored cotton with an air of almost delicate aristocracy. Coming and going upon the stone pavement before the well they are full of vivacity, and are surely supreme as retailers of humble gossip.

From Mary's well I went through the town. Although from a distance it looked so strangely clean and smart, I found plenty of Oriental dirt in it, but no Oriental bustle. The streets, which run steeply up and down the hill-slope, are narrow, with a raised pavement to right and left of a sort of sunken, paved trough which is in the middle, and which doubtless carries off the water in the rainy season. The uninteresting bazaars are roofed in. The "atmosphere" of Nazareth seemed to me very peculiar. It was not Oriental. I knew that when, on passing the open doorway of a sort of café, I saw squatting on the sill a wrinkled Arab woman who was beating a drum with her corrugated hands, while within some Moslems were hoarsely chanting a tune of the East. I longed to stop them. Such music seemed as totally out of place in Nazareth as would be a Salvation Army hymn in the Sahara. No, Nazareth is not Oriental, nor is it European, in atmosphere. I felt in it, as I felt strongly in Jerusalem, a certain pretension, a something disconcerting and spurious, even a certain confusion, produced, I think, by the fact that its sacred

fame has drawn to it Christian pilgrims of conflicting creeds. The lovely, the holy calm of Galilee was gone. I was not to find it again on my journey. The inhabitants of the more famous places in Palestine are almost forcibly prevented from being their natural selves, from preserving untarnished their individuality. I have not space to enter into questions of psychology here, but I know from Syrians themselves how distracting to many of them have been the efforts after conversion, after power, after spiritual and worldly domination, made by the many religious sects and societies which have sent their members to Palestine. And the confusion of the people is quickly conveyed to any sensitive traveler. Peace is unluckily not the dominant note in the Holy Land, and in Nazareth I knew it. A population of some eleven thousand, made up of Moslems, Orthodox Greeks, United Greeks, Latins, Maronites, and Protestants, is scarcely likely to live in a condition of holy calm, and, as a fact, the people of Nazareth are extremely turbulent of disposition, as well as diverse in their religious views.

The various "Holy Places" shown in Nazareth have no historic basis. The chief of them are the Church of the Annunciation, with the Column of Gabriel and the Column of Mary; the house of the Virgin; the workshop of Joseph; and the *Mensa Christi*, at which our Lord is supposed to have eaten with the disciples.

In the Latin monastery is the Church of the Annunciation, with the Angel's Chapel, and the house and kitchen

of the Virgin. To enter it, I passed beneath an arch and came into a spacious court surrounded by buildings, and containing a high column surmounted by a statue of the Virgin. The church is rather large, is paved in pink and gray, has a whitewashed roof and hideously painted walls. By a flight of steps you descend to the site of Mary's house and the Chapel of the Annunciation, where is an altar with a sacred picture behind it. Here you are surrounded by the living rock, stained black and gray except in certain parts, which are cased in gray marble. A grating in the flight of steps shows where the house began, and before the two final steps there are two side altars with pictures. Under the Virgin's altar four dim lights burn perpetually. Passing through a very low doorway, you find yourself in a tiny cavern of natural rock containing another altar, and a slight ascent leads to a third cavern in which I could just stand upright. This is named the Madonna's kitchen, and now holds a very ancient stone cross.

The Column of Mary, which is supposed to be miraculously suspended, is of red granite and is in the Chapel of the Annunciation. It is very large, and hangs from the ceiling, ending, I should say, about four feet from the ground. Immediately beneath it the Virgin is said to have received the message of the angel. Standing at the top of the stairs, looking down to the chapel, the effect of mystery and dimness, lit only by the soft shining of the distant lamps, is touching and strange. With-

in the area of the monastery, two months before my visit, were found four very fine capitals dating from the time of the Crusades. They are rough, but extremely expressive, with elaborately carved figures. The Franciscan monks are in charge of the excavations that are being carried on in Nazareth. They have been established there for seven hundred years. I talked to one of the fathers on a sort of terrace commanding a fine view close to the supposed site of the workshop of Joseph, and he showed me the foundations of a Crusaders' church, and gave me the key of the chapel built round the *Mensa Christi*, which is a great block of rough-hewn stone, partly covered with a hideous and gaudy piece of thin stuff, red, yellow, and blue. I also visited the synagogue, now possessed by the United Greeks, and not very interesting; the well-built and beautifully kept church of Syrian Protestants; and the church of the Orthodox Greeks, which has some of the barbaric fascination scarcely ever absent from the buildings dedicated to the faith of Holy Russia.

ON MOUNT TABOR

THE ascent of Mount Tabor is often omitted from the program of visitors to Nazareth. I confess to having enjoyed it much more than my time spent in the town. Ever since the fourth century, Mount Tabor has been claimed as the site of our Lord's Transfiguration. On this account monasteries have been built there. The

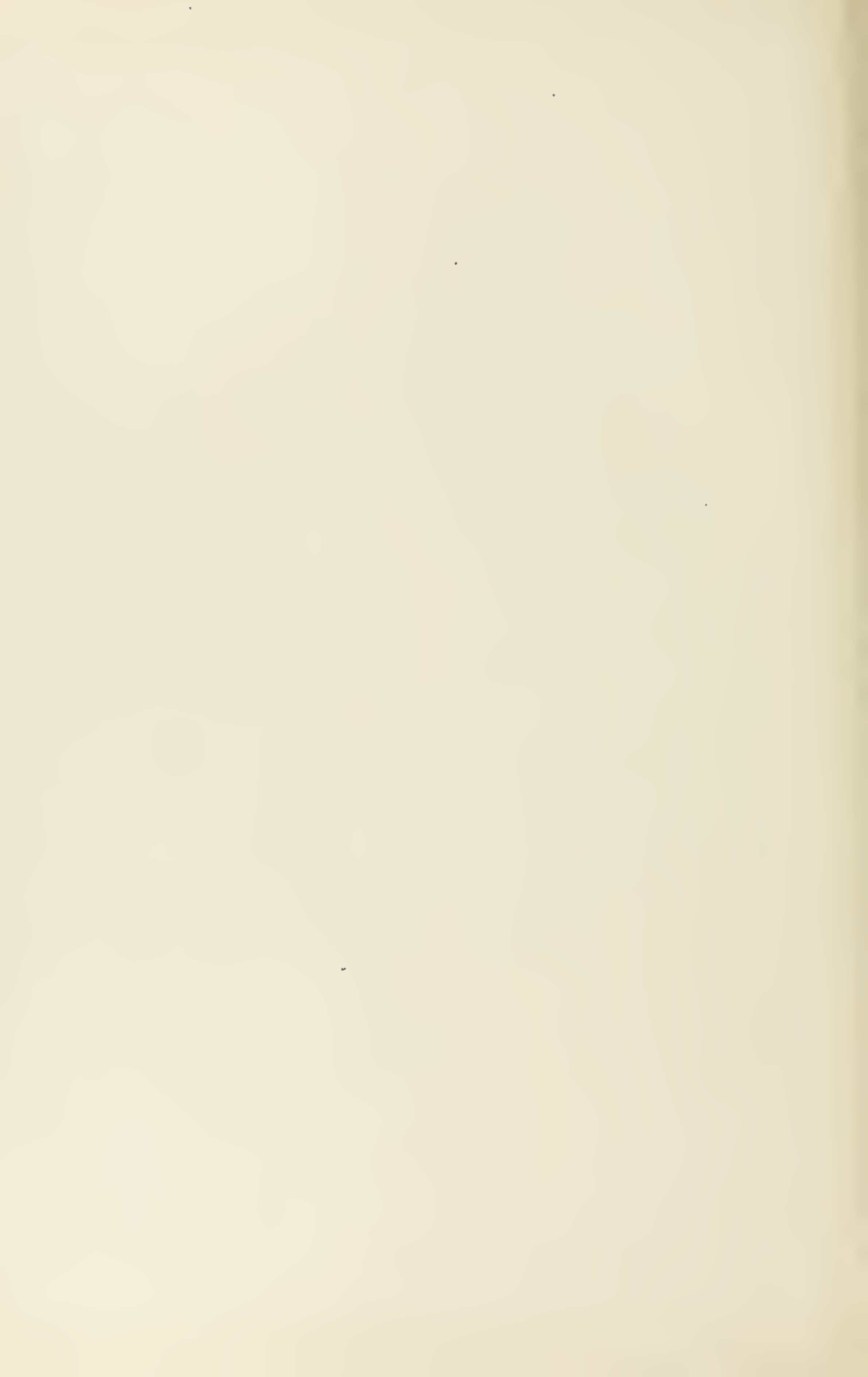




GATEWAY AT TIBERIAS



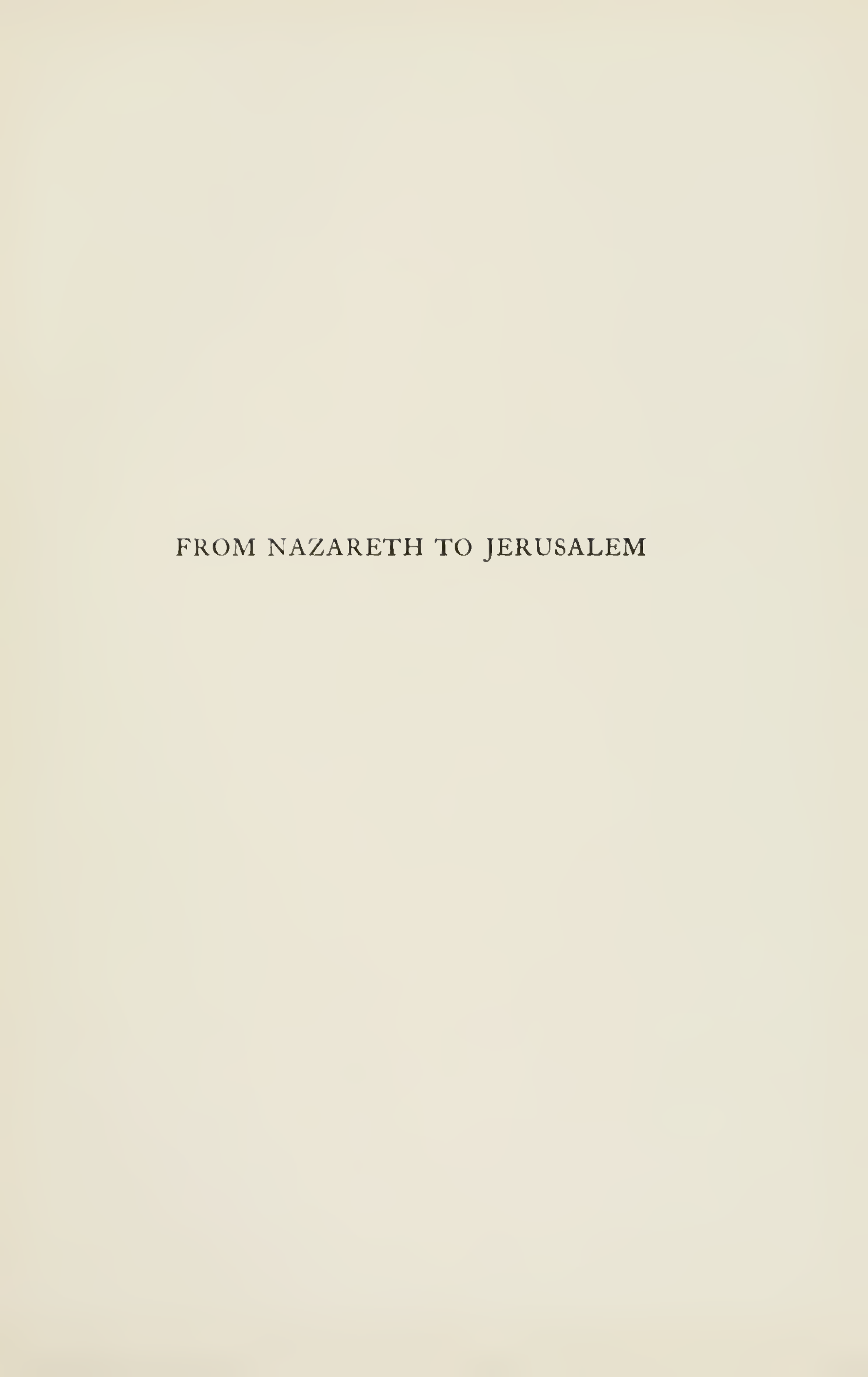
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best authorities, however, think it is improbable that the Transfiguration took place there, as in our Lord's time the summit was crowned by a fortified town. Nevertheless, multitudes of pious pilgrims, heedless of authority, and intent only on earnest belief, with imaginations aflame, wind up among the little oaks, the terebinths, the bushes of sweet-scented syringa, the starry daisies, and small scarlet poppies, singing hymns upon the way, and ceasing only when they reach the plateau on the crest of the helmet-shaped hill where stands the Latin monastery. There they pause near the door of the little chapel, above which is boldly written, "Hic Filius Dei Dilectus Transfiguratus Est." The good fathers at least have no doubts as to the sacredness of their strange and beautiful home, and their quiet certainty adds a flame to the fire of the devotees from far-off lands. I was content to drink in the sunny peace of this height garlanded with flowers, decorated with trees and shining green shrubs like some delicious garden, to steep myself in the sunlight, to listen to the languorous murmur of uncounted multitudes of bees, to feast my eyes upon the mighty view stretched out beneath me — the immense plain of Jezreel, over which I should ride on the morrow, that "great plain" of Josephus, which divides the ranges of Carmel from the delicate ranges of Galilee, in which at Endor the witch brought up Samuel, and at Nain the widow's son was restored to life; the far-off, magnificent Hermon,— where perhaps the Transfigura-

tion really took place,—lifting its crests of snow to the cloudless sky; the blue Hauran; Mount Carmel; and, sweetest of all, a section of the waters of Galilee. Two great white dogs belonging to the monastery slept at my feet. Doves were cooing. By the high wall, close to the sand-colored church, the serene cypresses moved their solemn heads in the marvelous breeze that surely came to me from the sea and the scented orange gardens of Jaffa, so perfumed, so fresh it was. On the green seat recessed by the monastery door two old pilgrims were dreaming, wide-eyed, of the Holy City, and perhaps were praying to die there when the miracle of the Holy Fire should be accomplished, and the Easter morning greeting said in the Court of the Holy Sepulcher. One of the four Franciscan brothers, in his brown habit, passed by the pollarded Judas-trees toward the ruins of the castle which stood erect and formidable in the Middle Ages, but which is now only a featureless mass of stones.

The two old pilgrims rose slowly from their seat. They dragged their weary limbs over the sunlit ground till they stood, near an ancient stone well with an iron cross, before the legend, "Hic Filius Dei Dilectus Transfiguratus Est." Then they knelt, crossed themselves, and leaning down, with a simultaneous movement that seemed to be a movement rather of the soul than of the body, they kissed the "holy mountain."



FROM NAZARETH TO JERUSALEM







MEN OF GALILEE



IV

FROM NAZARETH TO JERUSALEM

I CANNOT honestly say that I left Nazareth with any great regret; yet, as I rode out of it in the early morning, it looked smiling and attractive in its circle of hills, with its red roofs, its masses of prickly pear growing among the gray rocks, its grassy slopes, its silver-green and yellow-green trees, its gray stone walls, its towers. The sun was just up. Already at Mary's Well the graceful women were laughing and chattering as they drew water busily for household purposes; a train of camels was descending softly by the pathway from Galilee. White, blue, dull red, the color notes of the town struck a pleasant harmony with the green and the gray and the silver-green of nature. But from the summit of Tabor I had looked down over the mighty plain of Jezreel, and remembering the golden plain of the Huleh, where I rested beneath the walnut-tree while Musa Mustafa shot the wild duck, I longed once more to descend into the fertile bosom of Palestine, to be taken by the grasses and flowers, by the rustling crops and the thick, rank herbage, to be enfolded by that subtle and narcotic dream of the spring, which seems to hang,

like a heavy, delicious perfume, over the wide flats of the land of milk and honey. I have often heard it said that Palestine is not a land of much variety, even that it is very monotonous. If one compares it with other countries, the statement may be allowed to be true; but in spring it affords delicious contrasts of cold and almost grievous sterility with soft and languorous opulence, the contrasts between the heights and the plains. Sad and stony are the hills, or sometimes dull in their rounded nudity. Noble Hermon, with its glorious crest of snow, excites the spirit. But as one rides through Palestine, the general effect of the hills is one that makes for a monotony not free from melancholy. Monotonous, too, are the plains. But therein lies for me their supreme attraction. As one slowly descends into them, picking his way among the bristling rocks, he has the sensation of being taken as by some green and tranquil sea, full of lulling murmurs, and of movements that suggest passivity to the mind. The wild flowers stir in the breeze, the prairies of corn turn to a delicate pallor as the silken wind bends each ear. In the marshes the buffaloes repose, staring at nothing with their light eyes, in which a shallow idleness seems held. Pigeons wheel in the blue; Gipsies, Bedouins pass by; Circassians with fur hats, men from Moab in reds and blues, women whose heads are surrounded with halos of coins set upright on their edges in rows. The fellahs stand at gaze, or follow the plow, or squat among the crops over a mea-

ger repast of raisins, figs, and dry bread, followed perhaps by a cigarette, or by some whiffs from a brown pipe of clay with a wooden stem. Smiling women, barefooted, and clad in cotton garments, with flowing black head-dresses, go to draw water, bearing on their heads down-turned jars of earthenware, some of which hold as much as two gallons, or return with their jars upright, carried proudly with the dignity of a supreme competence. At noon the flocks and the herds are resting, perhaps among bushes of myrtle; and often a young shepherd, leaning on his long staff, or crook, makes a wonderful silhouette as he pauses in the bright sunshine, staring into the distance of the green and golden plain.

THE ARCADIAN CHARM OF PALESTINE

Arcady! It is an Arcady of the East, and of a charm to me irresistible. Cares drop away, are lost among the innocent wild flowers; fears, anxieties disperse on the gentle, caressing breezes. Far off, at evening, the little white tent will welcome you; and as you see it in the distance, and your horse, lifting his head and distending his sensitive nostrils, neighs joyously, you will bless from your heart the nomadic life.

Surely no one who has ridden hour after hour across the vast plains of Palestine in springtime can ever forget their charm, their peculiar, almost drug-like spell, irresistible and sweet, giving a peace akin to the peace of a sleep blessed, not troubled, by dreams to heart and

brain—by dreams of green and golden marshes, of softly, slowly moving oceans of corn and barley, of mazes of wild flowers quivering about the tripping feet of thin Syrian horses. And so I was in haste to go down into Esdraelon, that mighty expanse over which the hills of Nazareth, the hills of Galilee, the mountains of Samaria, keep watch; which is drained by the brook Kishon, the waters of which swept away the hosts of Sisera, and which teems with associations and is dotted with historic sites.

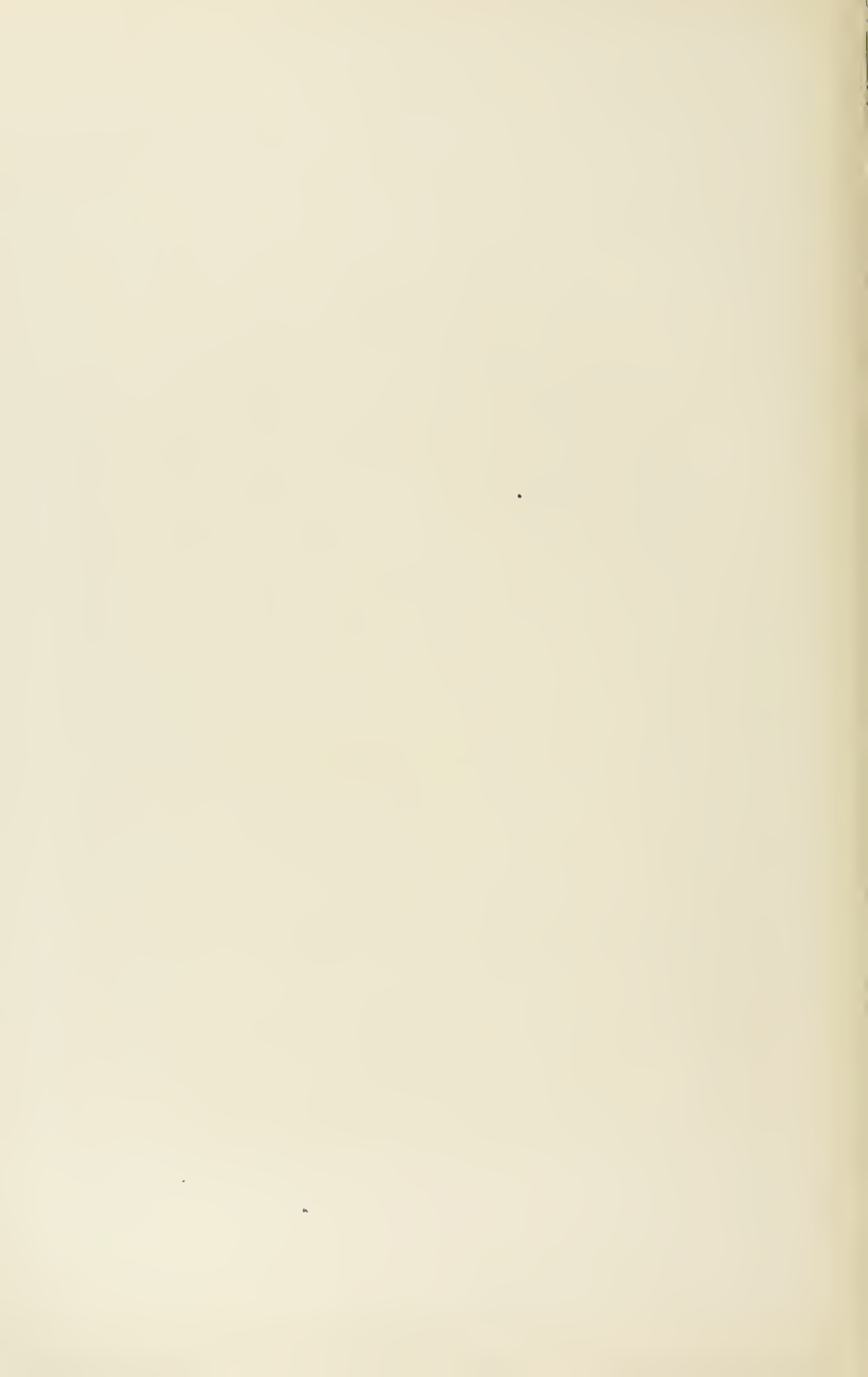
My destination was Jenin, once Engannim, on the eastern border of the plain, noted for its gardens, its waters, its fruit-trees. I had a seven-hours' ride before me—seven hours of dreams in the brilliant sunshine, of dreams of old days of battle, of robber hordes, and of deeds of mercy and horror; for here dwelt once the widow woman of Nain in the village whose name meant "pleasantness"; here at Endor dwelt the witch to whom Saul went disguised by night, who called up Samuel, and who "saw gods ascending out of the earth"; here, at Megiddo, Barak won his great victory, and Josiah sank down in his chariot, pierced by the arrows of the soldiers of Pharaoh Necho; here, at Gilboa, Saul and his sons were killed. And Jezebel knew this plain, and must have often looked out over it from her palace windows at Jezreel, now a miserable and filthy village. Here, too, Jehu drove furiously, and Gideon conquered the Midianites.





THE DAMASCUS GATE, JERUSALEM





In more modern days this plain has had an unenviable notoriety as the haunt of Arab robbers. Its soil is extraordinarily fertile, and as it is almost as flat as a table, it is very easy to cultivate. When I rode across it the aspect it presented to me was of smiling and radiant peace. Esdraelon does not compare for charm and seductiveness with the plain of the Huleh. It is more monotonous and less Arcadian. There is a certain dullness of cultivation which suggests the plodding lives of poor men. There are no buffaloes wallowing in yellow flowers. A railway track has been laid down, and though I saw it only for an instant as we crossed it, I received an unpleasant impression of being once more in touch with civilized traveling life. Instead of meeting on our way bands of perhaps thievish, but picturesque, Gipsies, clad in coats of many colors, we encountered only an English clergyman in a sun-helmet wending his way toward Nazareth, accompanied by a native servant. I found it easy to believe in deeds of mercy performed in the bosom of Esdraelon as I turned my eyes toward Nain, now a tiny native village of no special interest, but more difficult to realize that this happy-looking corn-land from time immemorial had been selected by man as a place of battle, of slaughter, and of almost every sort of ill deed.

The approach to Jenin is enticing, for the village, or little town, which is inhabited by Mohammedans, of whom there are about three thousand, is deliciously

placed in the midst of trees and verdure, with water and grassy lawns about it — lawns and gentle slopes which tempt the men of Jenin to happy sauntering with cigarette in mouth, the youths to quite "larky" games of play, and the healthy-looking children to ceaseless frolic. And the village itself, seen from a little distance, has the peculiar and ineffable charm, the strange, summoning attraction, which Mohammedan builders alone, it seems, know how to give to their mosques, their bath-houses, their dwellings.

As Damascus, seen from afar, has a fairy look of almost piercing, yet delicate, romance, so tiny Jenin, in its different way, has a fairy look, with its small minaret, its cupolas, its flat roofs peeping over the trees. Long I gazed at it that day and that evening till the darkness fell, yet never ceased to feel its summons, which was like the voice of an Eastern siren, whispering: "Come, I will show you romance. In my strange ways there is fascination. Among my shadows, where my fountain falls, beauty lies in hiding" But I was very wise, for I never entered Jenin. Its ancient name means "fountain of gardens," and it is believed to be the site of the "garden house" by which King Ahaziah fled from Jehu. When the night fell, a heavy dew lay on the grass about the tents; a slight, pearly mist hung over the still water in a marshy place near by, where frogs lifted their voices; and all night long foxes were crying out, and hyenas uttering their short, menacing

bark, which seems to come from the depths of a bad temper through a sore throat.

THE MODERN SAMARIA

Our destination next day was Nablus, the ancient Shechem, once the chosen home of the Samaritans and the capital town of Palestine. On the way I made a slight detour, and an ascent into the mountains, to visit Samaria. This is now a dirty and uncared-for village, in a superb situation, commanding a glorious view extending to the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea. I dismounted on reaching the village, and, pioneered by two or three greedy villagers, who gazed at my pockets as if they were places of interest far superior to Samaria, climbed some steep ground under a burning sun to see the site of Ahab's ivory palace and the street of columns. There were a good many fragments of ruins here, and many columns without capitals; but the glory of the place is the view. Omri, like the ancient Greeks, knew where to build, and must have loved wide prospects; perhaps in this love, shared by a good many of us, ignorantly showing the criminal instinct somewhere attributed by Lombroso to those who take delight in gazing upon great distances.

Below the village is the mosque which was formerly the Church of St. John, built by Crusaders. The villagers here have a very bad reputation. They are fanatically religious, and appear to combine this too

animated ardor with a vital propensity for the picking of pockets, in which branch of subtle agility they might give points to a Fagin. Having been previously warned of their talents, I escaped from their attentions intact, and again rode joyously down into the valley.

Nablus is only about fourteen hours' ride from Jerusalem, and at a good distance from it I began to be aware at last that I was nearing a great center. The fascination of the wilds gave place to a different fascination, emanating from the activity of men. The feet of our horses rang on a hard highroad, on each side of which were groves of superb old olive-trees, veterans of the race, with trunks that looked Rembrandtesque, and with noble crowns of green and silver. And upon this highway we met men surely of substance, mounted on fine, fiery horses; and with us, approaching the city, were caravans. The hum of life was about us, waking excitement in us and our beasts, and as we wound upward, and saw the solid stone houses of the town of the olives, where still linger some pale Samaritans under the shadow of Gerizim,—that mountain from which the people of Israel were blessed when they came into the Land of Promise,—we forgot the wilds, and rejoiced in the cheeriness and the gaiety of eager humanity.

We camped above the town in a forest of olives, and there I was visited in the evening by Samaritans, and in the early morning by seven lepers. The Samaritans came drifting up the hill with a curious air of fatigue and



RUINS OF SAMARIA, THE NORTHERN CAPITAL





vagueness, three tall, tired youths, with decadent faces, small-boned limbs, a loose and shambling gait, that reminded me of the gait of an unfortunate Chinese giant whom I once saw sadly displaying his too many inches in an exhibition. When they reached the tent door, and stood still, gazing upon me with mournful eyes, they looked like strange esthetes of the Eastern world, with drooping hands that should have held drooping lilies. Yet, though they drooped, and had a feeble aspect that some might have thought gentle, as they stayed with me I received from them an unpleasant impression as of a still — I might almost say subterranean — venom, of a white pertinacity akin to a white heat. And this strange race, now almost extinct, has always been famous for malice, for pertinacity, for fanaticism, and for a certain dogged indifference to the opinions of those whose power has been greater than its own.

THE REMNANT OF THE SAMARITANS

It is true that in the mind of the Christian world a parable has forever fixed the expression, "the good Samaritan"; but the Samaritans, who always affirmed that they were descended from Jacob, were opponents of Christianity in the first years after Christ, and when Christ was alive they refused him hospitality. Their hatred of the Jews was intense, and the Jews repaid it, and even went so far as to deny that the Samaritans would rise again at the last day.

Thirty-eight years ago in all Palestine there were only two hundred of them, most of whom dwelt at Nablus. Now, I am told, there are very few, less than a hundred. The youths who visited me looked like the last survivors of a race that had almost decayed from the face of the earth. Yet the families that remain still hold themselves apart from all the rest of the world, still worship in their own little synagogue in the city, and celebrate the Passover on Mount Gerizim, where the Samaritans built a temple both because they needed a place of worship and as a mark of their hostility to the Jews, who had refused to allow them to help in the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. And of course they still preserve the Samaritan codex of the Pentateuch. One can only respect their extraordinary tenacity, their rigid determination not to be absorbed, but to remain in every sense true Samaritans, few though they are, and dwellers in the midst of a hostile and fanatical population almost wholly Moslem. One can respect them, but, judging by my Samaritan visitors, I should say it would be difficult to love them or to trust them. After remaining with me for some time the three youths suggested that I should give them a little money, as an acknowledgment of my own hospitality, I suppose. I complied,—when does the traveler in the East not comply?—and with many languid salutations they drifted away among the trunks of the olives, and faded into the city.

Nablus has a bad reputation, and though in my wan-

derings through its narrow and often dark streets I was never insulted or pelted, I was often aware of a silent but intense hostility, such as I used to be aware of years ago when I was in Morocco, and walked through the filthy alleys and teeming bazaars of Tetuan. "Christian dog!" I saw that in many pairs of glittering eyes as they stared at me. The houses are solid and often large, and some of them look, and are, very ancient. An Arab bath-house that I visited is said to be some hundreds of years old. It was swarming with cockroaches, which covered the walls, and crept everywhere over the pavements of marble. As I emerged from it into the street, a huge rat scampered in front of me, as if to show me the way out of the vaporous darkness. Night was falling, was shrouding the minarets and the numberless cupolas, was filling the arcades with shadows out of which rose mysterious voices and the violent cries of the East. When I returned to my tent in the forest of olives, the dogs of the town — it seemed in scores — had assembled themselves together to serenade my slumbers. I woke to the seven lepers.

There were four men and three women, and they were crouched in the heavy dew upon the short grass at the foot of the little slope that lay beyond the camp. As I glanced at them for a moment, I did not realize their horrible condition, for they were muffled up, and looked rather like monstrous bundles. But, seeing me, the bundles stirred. Shattered faces came — I can

scarcely say looked — forth; arms and hands as twisted as the trunks of old olives; legs and feet, distorted, eaten away. They rose up out of the sea of dew, and came whimpering for alms. Who could refuse them? Unlike the pale Samaritans, the lepers did not depart with their gift to their own place. They returned to the foot of the slope, crouched down in line, and pulled their draperies about them; and there they remained when the camp was struck and we set out for Sinjil.

THE TOMB OF JOSEPH

Soon after leaving the city we came to the tomb of Joseph and the well by which Jesus is said to have met the woman of Samaria, and which is called Jacob's Well. The tomb is close to the village of Asker, a strange rummage of Oriental habitations and earth-walled courts, in which I caught glimpses of women literally smothered in pigments, with halos of coins set on edge around their heads. In the glaring sunshine, and in surroundings suggestive of poverty hand in hand with dirt, these painted and dyed household drudges — for they all seemed busy with mysterious and ungraceful tasks — looked as out of place and unsuitable as would peacocks on a dust-heap. Their arms were covered with bracelets, and their fingers with rings, and charms of various kinds were hung about their necks. Some of them were very handsome, and their halos suited them almost as well as in Italian pictures their halos suit the saints; but there is always to me something peculiarly





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NAZARETH



revolting in that combination of finery, paint, and dirt which seems so attractive to the Eastern. And when the early morning sunshine gleams on rouge and henna and kohl, one is aware of great indiscretion, if not of active cruelty, on the part of the sun.

The tomb of Joseph, whitewashed and quite modern, is in a small building access to which is gained through a courtyard where I found a Mohammedan schoolmaster comfortably established, with some twenty small pupils who were busily murmuring passages from the Koran. Strung across the tomb chamber were strings on which hung quantities of votive rags. The schoolmaster acted as guide to the tomb, and informed me that it is absolutely certain that Joseph was buried there. More interesting, and far more charming, is Jacob's Well.

JACOB'S WELL

THIS is one of the best authenticated holy places in all Palestine, that land where the pilgrim has to take much on trust, and the Greek church has it happily in possession. There is very little, if any, doubt that Jesus really sat by this well, and there said those words which have driven strong men to the cloister, and drawn young girls from the dawning pleasures of life to the silence behind the grille: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Pilgrims throng to this small inclosure, with its low-roofed house

for their entertainment, its chapel built about the well, its bushes covered with tiny pink roses; but when I was there the hour was so early that not even a patient and pathetic Russian was before me. Birds were singing above the roses. From the hospice came a young man in the habit of a monk to take me to the well. It is very deep, and he let down a wooden tray with candles stuck upon it to light up the darkness, till far below I saw a gleam of still water. As I looked, bending over the small orifice, with the silent monk beside me, I remembered those other words said here so many hundreds of years ago: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

As I left, the monk gave me a bunch of pink roses; and I kept them long after the color had faded from them and their tiny petals had shriveled up.

When we rode away, and came to a good road, bordered by olive groves, something prompted me to ask my Syrian companion whether there were cuckoos in Palestine. There was something so lively and spring-like in the air that it made me think of England, and of the yellow clouds of primroses in copses full of flickering lights and gentle shadows. He had never heard of the cuckoo, and when I imitated its call, he did not know it. About half an hour later a cuckoo sang out lustily. My companion pulled up his horse, and we listened to that music of spring which in more than twenty years

of a life spent always in Syria he had never before heard. Soon after the voice of the cuckoo had faded away, we turned our horses' heads to the left, and struck into the mountains. Bethel lay in the distance, but I did not go there. I wished to see Shiloh, the "place of rest," where the tabernacle once stood in Ephraim, and where the Philistines came to take away the ark of the covenant. We rode up a naked and stony gully, gradually ascending, and presently leaving far down on our left a stream, which flowed among rocks, and occasionally was formed by them into shining pools. The heat was intense as noontide drew near. Our horses sweated as they scrambled upward. The bare flanks of the hills gleamed cruelly in the tremendous blaze. Presently, far below, I heard a thin music, rustic and reedy, and as definitely and delightfully "countrified," almost clownish,—using the word in its true, not in its ugly and exaggerated, sense,—as the music that in an orchestra comes from the oboe, and at once makes one think of places that shepherds love and of fleecy flocks. I pulled up, and some hundreds of feet, I suppose, beneath me I saw some Syrian herdsmen bathing in a pool of the rocks, while one sat near them and piped. The sun shone fiercely on skins of bronze. A cry came up to us, then a shout of laughter, and both were clad as in a garment of music; and the musician, the bathers, we, and all the hills, were clad in a garment of fire. Since that day, in lands of darkness, I have remembered

that moment, and the joy of the open-air life in the Holy Land has caught me by the throat.

SHILOH, THE "PLACE OF REST"

THERE is scarcely anything to see at Shiloh. We reached a sort of plateau, where there were low stone walls, and such masses of stones everywhere that we dismounted and led our horses till we stood on the spot where once there was a city, the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant. Now there are only a few bits of ruin of very little interest, heaped among the stones and the patches of cultivation. The village near by is called Seilun.

From Shiloh it was an easy ride to our last camping-ground, Sinjil, which we reached about three in the afternoon.

It was a pleasant place that had been chosen for the last night in the tents, always a night of keen regret, but also of that keen enjoyment—enjoyment with a sharp edge to it—which belongs to the pleasure which is nearly at an end. High up in the hills, in the midst of a great, grassy circle, the camp was pitched, looking over a wide prospect of rolling slopes and crests and ridges, now gradually assuming that peculiar, delicately mysterious, and almost shy beauty that becomes ever more and more romantic as the afternoon light slips into the bosom of the radiance of evening. At a little distance on the brow of the hill was a native village, the







PLAIN OF DOTHAN, PALESTINE



inhabitants of which evidently lived the pastoral life with completeness; for there was a great bleating and lowing of flocks and herds, and as I sat having tea before the tent, in that most delicious hour of the traveler's day, I saw multitudes of sheep and cattle being driven by toward the huddled houses among the stone walls. The drivers were quite small children. They laughed and begged, but discreetly, as they passed. And later, when their duties were accomplished, they returned to squat on the grass and to gaze upon my cook's preparation of dinner.

FROM AND TO JERUSALEM

THAT evening a second camp arrived, to the music of many bells. It belonged to two Englishmen who had left Jerusalem in the morning, and who were on their way to make the ascent of Mount Hermon. After dinner they paid me a visit. When they heard that I was bound for Jericho and Jerusalem, and that I meant to be present at all the Holy Week and Easter ceremonies, including that of the Holy Fire, they said, in effect, "We pity you." Remembering my experience in the deadly cold of the haunt of bears, I secretly returned their compassion as I asked them why. They described to me the crowded and turbulent state of Jerusalem, and dwelt specially on the scenes which were likely to take place in the neighborhood of the Holy Sepulcher, which, from their account, seemed to be the center of all the strife,

hatred, and greed, as well as of most of the worship and adoring love, in the sacred city. And one of them actually tried to dissuade me from my intention of witnessing the Holy Fire, at which ceremony, he said, it was almost certain that there would be a riot, in which numbers of people would probably be crushed to death. I replied that I preferred a riot in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to a night in a cave on the summit of Hermon. And so we parted amicably, each one intent on the crazy proceeding that his temperament cried out for.

On the following morning I got up while it was still quite dark, and on the height where we had slept the heavy dews were lying. The strange cold that precedes the dawn enveloped us. I heard outside the steady and small sound made by the hobbled horses and mules persistently cropping the grass, and the lively voices of the men, excited by the thought of soon seeing their homes and families, and of receiving the bakshish they had well earned by their hard work on our journey. Faintly from the distance came the barking of dogs and the lowing of cattle. I opened the tent door and smelled the pungent odor of coffee. As the dawn broke, I saw my acquaintances of the previous night mounting their horses, apparently eager to cover the long distance that stretched between them and the snow-crowned heights of Hermon. The tents collapsed, and suddenly a lonely, unfurnished bareness took the place of the coziness of home, and I ceased to regret,

and began to look forward eagerly. My cook bade me farewell, and sprang on to his horse. He had vowed to be first in Jerusalem. With a loud cry he struck his heels into his horse's sides, and went off at a break-neck gallop. A pale gleam of the sun touched the ridge of a hill in the east. The bells chimed on the necks of the pack-mules. Soon we were once more on a high-road, with our faces turned toward Jerusalem.

During the first hours of the journey the sun shone brightly, but as we drew nearer to the city, and long before we could see it, clouds began to gather in the sky, and when we stopped to lunch, while yet two hours from it, the sun was hidden, a cold wind swept over the hills, and some raindrops pattered in our faces. We crouched down under a low stone wall in a place where olive-trees were sparsely dotted about among gray rocks, and I remembered the slopes of Hermon.

Upon the road near to us strings of camels continually went by, Syrians and Arabs on horseback, women holding draperies to their mouths and carrying bundles, children on donkeys. Now and then a carriage passed, filled with travelers from Europe or America. The wind increased. The land looked inhospitable, cruel. And when we rode on again, I was filled with wonder that a great city should ever have been built on the site of Jerusalem.

The country about Jerusalem is essentially a pale country. Indeed, I often thought it looked stricken, as

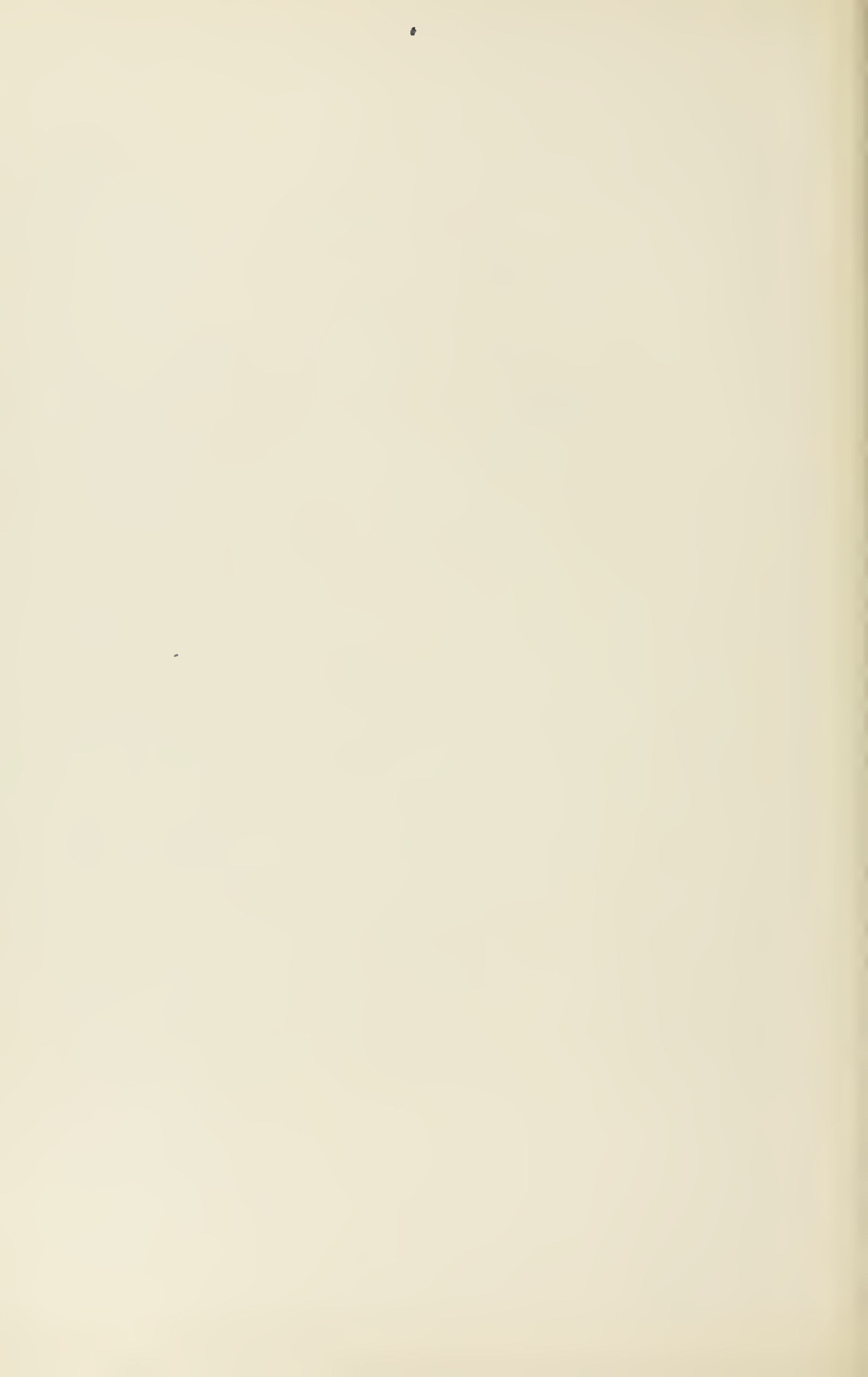
if its pallor had come upon it abruptly, had been sent to it as a visitation. I was not sorry that I saw it first under grayness and swept by winds. The grayness, the winds, seemed to me to emphasize its truth, to drive home its reality. And there was something noble in its candor. Even Nature can take on an aspect of trickiness at times, or at least a certain coquetry, a daintiness not wholly free from suggestions of artificiality. The landscape in the midst of which Jerusalem lies is dreary, is sad; in stormy weather is almost forbidding: yet it has a bare frankness that renders it dignified, a large simplicity that is very striking. The frame is sober, the picture within it is amazing; and neither, once seen, can ever be forgotten.



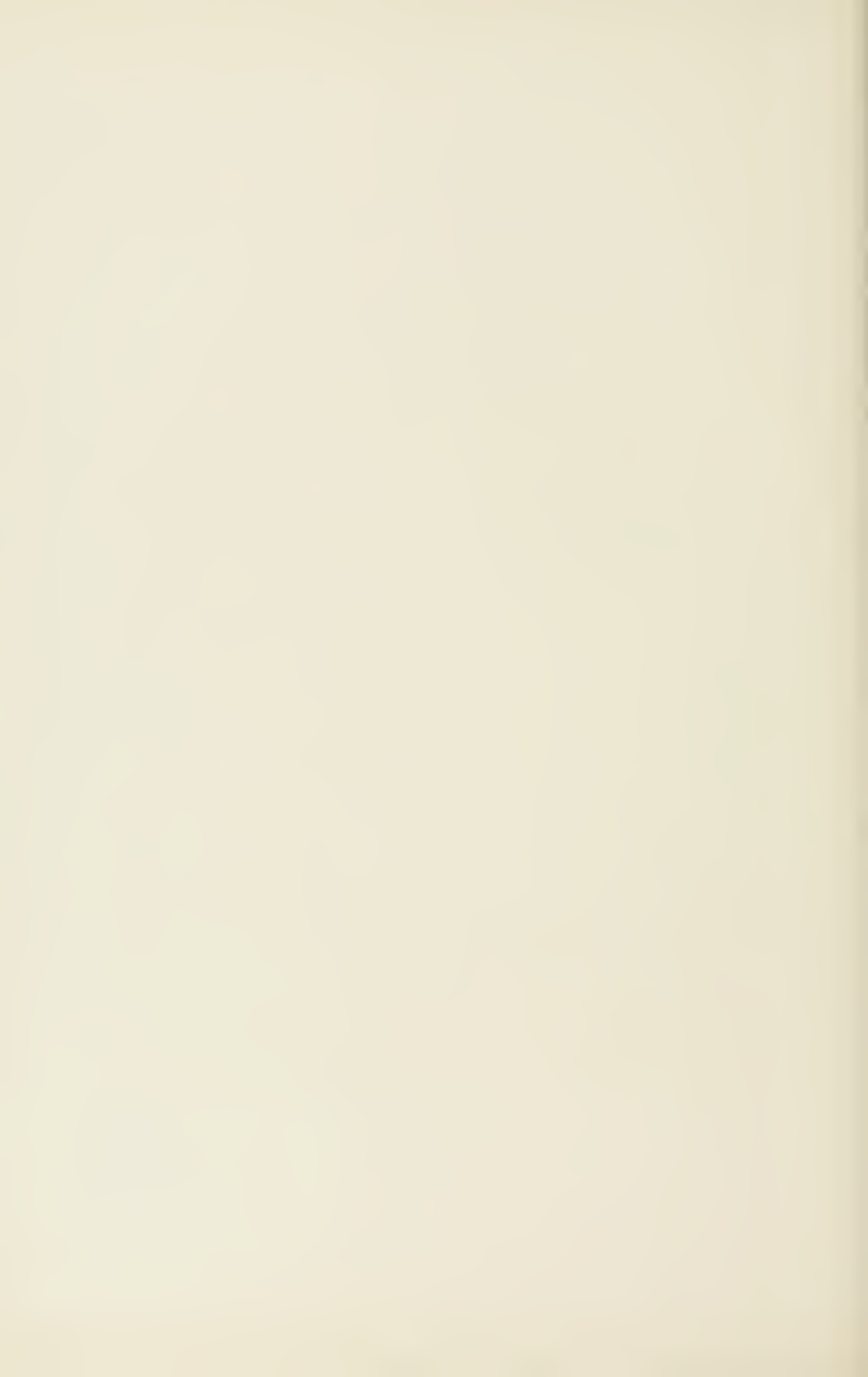
CRUSADERS' ARCH AND TOWER AT RAMLEH



From a photograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood



FROM JERICHO TO BETHLEHEM



V

FROM JERICHO TO BETHLEHEM

JERICHO has much of the peculiar fascination that belongs to an oasis. It is a tract of rich, subtropical fertility, guarded sternly, as if it were some precious jewel, by sterility. And the sterility is as grand as the jewel is enticing. There is nothing in the Holy Land more impressive than the country that lies about Jericho. It has a vigorous wildness, essentially and splendidly masculine, which uplifts the spirit of man. It is an ascetic, but it is also a tonic region; a place for robbers, but also for anchorites, for the activities of crime, but also for the activities of saintliness. One might easily fall among thieves in that strange but profoundly interesting turmoil of rocks and ravines and mountains. And might not one as easily be fed by ravens? The traveler, if he be at all imaginative, can almost believe it. For nature there has an impress that seems eloquent of an almighty hand. And this impress, formidable and glorious, has deeply affected the sensitive souls of men.

An extraordinary population has been drawn to the savage neighborhood of the Dead Sea, a population of anchorites, solitaries, mortifiers of the flesh, monks, and mere eccentrics; these last probably men of unstable mental equilibrium, whose imaginations have been inflamed by the combination of marvelous tradition with marvelous nature, and who have thought to be wonderful in the midst of wonder.

As one travels to Jericho, if one leaves the highway now and then for a track in the hills, one can look down from afar upon the scattered homes of these people of the wilderness. Before them, perhaps, are tiny and meandering terraces, with minute alcoves perched above beetling precipices. Some are bordered by tracts of desolation which I have heard called gardens. Very seldom does one spy out any inhabitant. But now and then a black, doll-like figure may be discerned moving among the labyrinthine rocks, leaning on a parapet, descending a staircase or ladder, creeping almost like a fly along the mountain-side with a pannier of provisions, or letting down a water-basket from on high into the trickle of the Kedron. In and about the ravine of the Kedron anchorites have loved to dwell, in the "monk's valley" which eventually merges into the Wadi-en-Nar, or "Valley of fire." All this region recalls to one's mind the history of Elijah, so full of drama, and that "school of Prophets" which, perhaps a mere name till one has "gone down" from Jerusalem unto Jericho, remains







THE RIVER JORDAN



ever after in the memory a living reality. One has seen the place of the Prophets, and henceforth one thinks of them not as fantastic and almost impossible beings, unnatural anywhere, a sort of visitation sent down upon a heedless world, but as men belonging to their world and their time, no longer unnatural, meet children of this astounding mother at whose breast they were suckled, out of whose arms they rose, to direct and to denounce. Even religion, even the consuming love of God, must, one feels, have had in it something savage, stern, even something bitter, in such a tract of the world as this, before the teaching of Christ.

In going to Jericho I visited Bethany, where Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, and where he often retired to rest in the house of Mary and Martha. Bethany is a small village of gray houses spread out on a slope of the Mount of Olives, with some fruit-trees and olives about it, overlooked by a Russian church with a cupola and tower, where it is said that Mary met our Lord and begged him to come to Lazarus. Most of the houses are now inhabited by Mohammedans. I descended a number of steep steps in darkness to see the place called the Tomb of Lazarus, a sort of cavern excavated in the limestone, in which the Franciscan fathers occasionally say mass. I was also shown the massive ruins of the House of Simon the Leper and the House of Mary and Martha. The latter name is given to an arch and a small, rough bit of wall contained in

an inclosure full of brambles, grass, poppies, and wild cactus. A pomegranate-tree also raises its head there. A bird was singing. A light breeze stirred the heads of the poppies. The cries of little, playing Mohammedans came to me from without. The authenticity of this holy place is, I believe, very doubtful. The age of the fragments of ruin is not known, nor is it established that their site is the site where she who sat at our Lord's feet, and she who was cumbered with much serving, once had their humble dwelling. Yet that small inclosure remains in my memory as a sweet and touching place, perhaps because it has been let alone—left to the poppies and the grasses instead of stiffly planted with marigolds and stocks. In it one can understand that Christ found peace at Bethany, and loved to come there from the turmoil of Jerusalem. The name, Bethany, is said by some to mean house of affliction; by others, house of dates, though the latter, in the East, could surely never be also the former.

It was after leaving Bethany, and getting into the highway which eventually descends to the plain where Jericho lies, that I for the first time saw the most touching sight in the Holy Land, the Russian peasants on pilgrimage. Hitherto I had occasionally met them in twos and threes on the long ways of the land, and of course swarming everywhere in Jerusalem. Now I saw them in small bands, on the march. The day was rather windy and cold, one of those peculiar white days

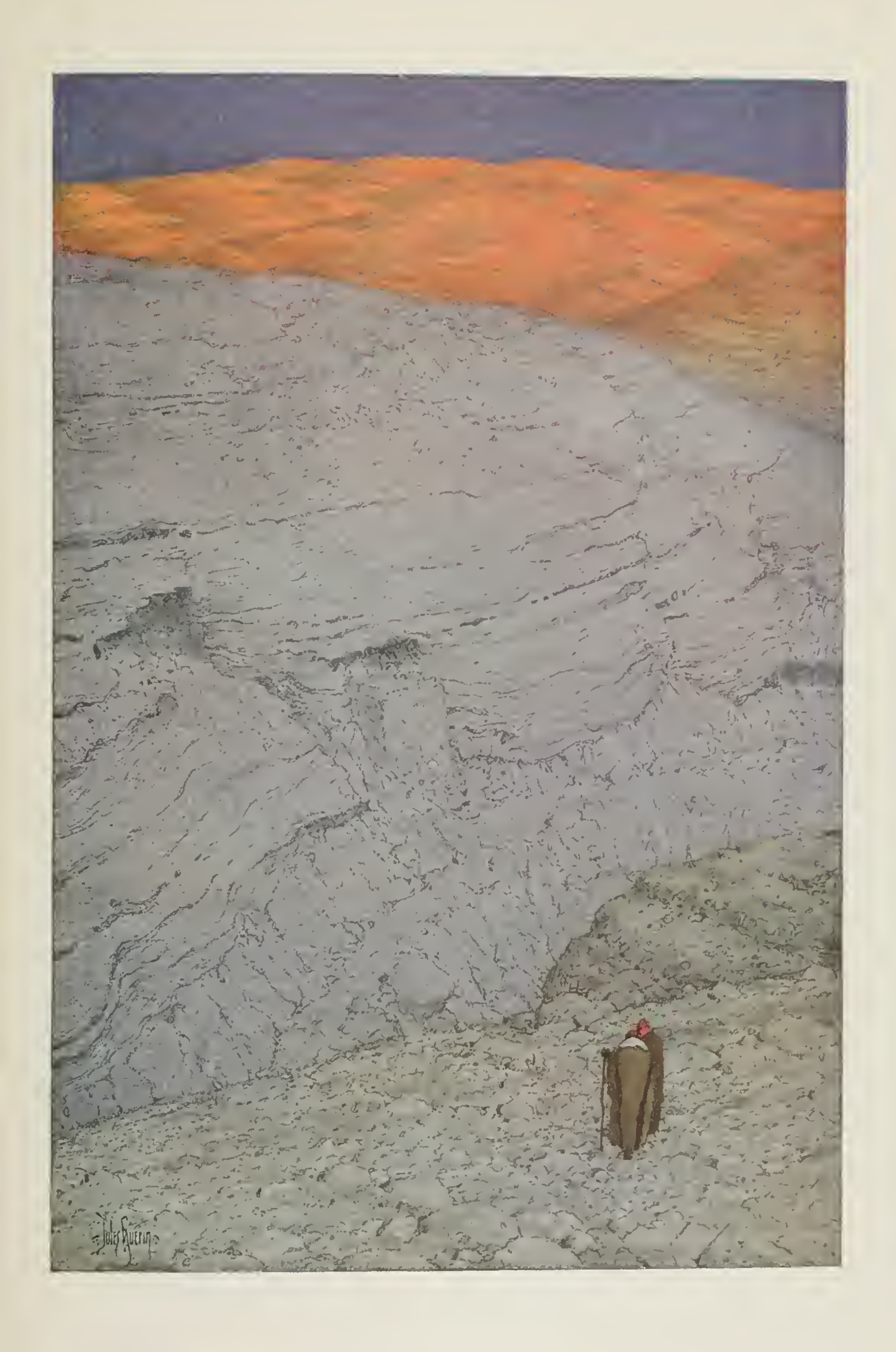
that are at the same time glaring and sad. The country into which I was coming was barren; looked almost hostile in its desolation. One saw this road, obviously an important highway, and yet one could not believe that it led to any center, to any habitations of men. It seemed to be winding into the wilderness where no water is. And into the wilderness, bravely, with their strange simplicity of courage, were marching the people of Holy Russia, singing hymns in the wind, among the stones, the dust, the nakedness. These voices go straight to the heart. In their timbre is the innocence that dwells in the eyes of a young child. But in the eyes of the child one sees a touching faith and perfect confidence in this world. In the voices of the Russian pilgrims one hears faith and confidence in the world to come, when pilgrimage will be over, and feet rest among the flowers of paradise.

Before the Inn of the Good Samaritan we stopped to repose among the pilgrims. This humble and rough place of refreshment stands quite alone near the summit of a pass, with hills behind it. It is a long, one-storied building of yellow stone, with a sloping roof of pink tiles, round windows with yellow shutters of wood, and a great arched doorway leading into the paved and sparsely furnished interior. Before it are long, wooden troughs at which the horses feed, while the drivers drink coffee and smoke cigarettes. It was eight o'clock in the morning, and the near hills were full of delicate

shades of pink and of yellow. Far away the lofty mountains of Moab loomed through a wonder of haze. All around the pilgrims were resting. Most of them were old, and some very old. One man, immensely tall and gaunt, with bushy eyebrows, high cheek-bones, small gray eyes, and a flattened nose with wide nostrils, had an extraordinary resemblance to the portraits of Tolstoi. His beard flowed far over his chest, on which lay five medals. He wore a high fur hat, top-boots, and a long soldier's coat drawn in at the back. And he sat on a bit of rock, eating slowly a hunch of dark bread, which he had drawn from a bundle and which he cut with a clasp-knife. Near him were three elderly women, broad, heavily built, and loaded with bundles, and an old man whose face was muffled up in shaggy gray hair. The members of this group did not speak. They sat together, gazing quietly at this place—one of the places of their holy dreams in their own land. Now at last they were here, on the spot where the man fell among thieves, and was succored, and brought to an inn, and taken care of. There was something mystical in those old eyes, which had seen much of the weariness and the trouble of life, but which now saw the land of Jesus. The three women began to sing with the voices of children. And the old soldier forgot to eat, laid his gnarled hands on his dusty knees, and listened, moving his lips. Always along the road other pilgrims came, toiling upward like Christian up the Hill of Difficulty, bowed be-



THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA


Jules Guerin



neath the loads that had been carried from the interior of Russia, and seldom laid away except on the voyage over the sea, at night, and during the long stay in the holy city. Presently before the Inn of the Good Samaritan there was quite a crowd, and nearly all were Russians. Bits of black bread were produced by men and women, and eaten slowly, not voraciously, but with a quiet relish. Some crossed themselves repeatedly. A few prayed. There was not much talking. Many seemed to be sunk in wide-eyed dreams. Many were very grave, but in their gravity there was no bitterness; only a sort of gentle and deep seriousness that was full of humanity. Now and then a few voices sang sweetly together. And presently, the repose over, the black bread eaten, the bundles were girded on again, the big staffs were taken in hand, and onward they slowly went once more; their minds surely full of the thought of Jordan, their eyes set toward the mountains of Moab. Whenever I saw the Russian pilgrims I thought of that day when Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst.

The descent into the plain of Jericho is tremendously wild. From the turmoil of rocks one looks down, and one sees a green patch set in a great tract that is like the desert, and that stretches to the shore of the Dead Sea. This patch is Jericho. And Jericho, so often abused, spoken of as a filthy and abandoned village devoid of interest, as a collection of squalid hovels, as a place to get away from as quickly as possible, is in

reality full of fascination, of a peculiar poetry. Josephus has called it the Earthly Paradise. But that was very long ago. Once the patch of green was only part of a great stretch of glorious fertility in the midst of which was a city shaded by groves of palms. From Mount Quarantana, not far off in the west, Satan is said to have shown our Lord "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." And in those days the valley of the Jordan was a highway for great caravans going from Damascus to Arabia. Now a strange peace, a delicious lethargy, has fallen upon this region. It is full of the beauty of desertion. Others may regret what one well-known writer has called "the wretchedness and ruin" of Jericho. I am unable to do so. To me, coming down upon it from the savage route that winds through the country of the anchorites, liberated after many days from the perpetual winds and from the rain that prevailed in Jerusalem, it seemed like a little paradise. It lies between eight and nine hundred feet below the level of the sea, at the edge of one of the strangest, most ghastly and abandoned wildernesses I have ever seen — the valley of the Jordan, with its slime-pits, its hillocks crowned with sidr-trees,— those cruel trees full of thorns from one of which perhaps Christ's crown was made,— its streaks and gashes of sickly white and sickly yellow, like long and livid wounds made in the shrinking body of the earth, its orange-colored sands melting into clay, its lonely sea of death. Over all this valley there broods





From a photograph by American Colony, Jerusalem

INN OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

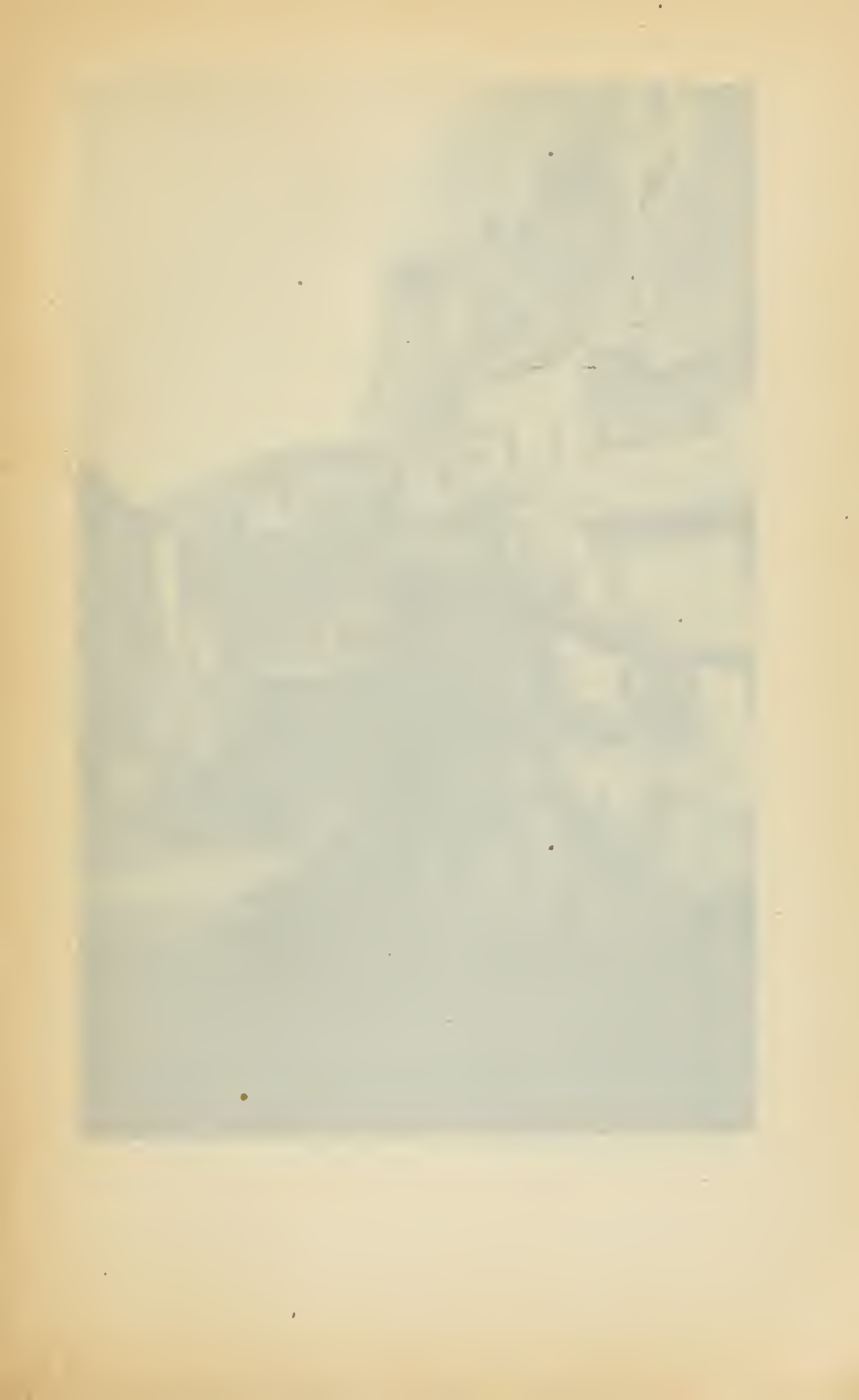


a strange and hectic warmth, enervating, no doubt, and perhaps hateful if one has to endure it for long, but delicious—to me at least—for a short time, after days spent in the midst of damp, and blown upon perpetually by cold and gusty winds.

All that now remains of Jericho is a village of tumble-down houses occupied by a population of Bedouins and negroes, with a few better habitations of stone with red roofs, three or four small hotels, a church of Holy Russia, a Russian hospice, and a serai. But this village is embraced by gardens and thickets, and wild, luxuriant vegetation that recalled to me memories of the tropics, and of the isles in the deep blue seas that are full of mystery and wonder. Again and again, as I wandered alone in the oasis, where the women in dim purple and black, their heads bound by red and orange handkerchiefs, their breasts covered with masses of beads and amulets, glide noiselessly by on naked feet, carrying between their lips those wonderful mauve roses of Jericho, I thought of Haiti, of villages under the Blue Mountains of Jamaica, where life seems always a dream, at least to the Western man.

If you wish to savor Jericho, to enter into its dream, you must escape from companions and go alone, as I did, for long strolls without an aim, for slow saunters in the warm noontide and at evening between the hedges of pea-flowers, the pepper-trees, the oleanders, the tall bamboos. The drowsy air that enfolds you seems to

have a definite personality, to be fraught with a definite purpose, the lulling of all energetic desires to sleep. It has caught strange perfumes into its net, captured from those half-hidden gardens of which you catch glimpses over or through the uneven and broken hedges of the *spina Christi*—gardens where the pink and white and mauve of the pea-blossoms mingle with the rose-colored flower of the oleander, with the white of the jasmine, with the vivid red of the pomegranate-blossom. And the oleander of Jericho is a tree with a thick and twisted trunk, and the jasmine, too, is a tree beneath which you can sit down to dream. Everywhere the bamboo raises its yellow-green head. It grows in masses almost as dense as the masses of thorn-bushes which, spreading everywhere through Jericho, give it that definite note of unkemptness which reminded me of the unkempt luxuriance—of course on the great, not the small scale—of the West Indian forests. An extraordinary calm hangs over the gardens, the half-hidden huts of the natives, the thickets, the groves. A voice singing among the bamboos by a trickle of water, the laugh of a negro child who divides the thorns or the jasmine flowers with its little black hands to peep at the passing stranger, the cry of a boy to his companion at the edge of Elisha's Fountain—these sounds, mysteriously detached, arise in the drowsy sunshine out of the wide and remote silence like delicate echoes, and seem to sink back into it like things governed by the necessity of languid repose.



AT MAR SABA, BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND THE DEAD SEA



From a photograph, copyright, by Henry Troth



Life, as we Westerners think of it, seems removed to an immense distance. One can hardly believe in it any more. The hashish of Jericho is at our lips. A little more wandering, and it is in our brains, and surely in our hearts. At a turn in the path, under a mimosa-tree, stands a slim girl with long Arab eyes, holding loosely a great bouquet of mauve-pink roses. Her bracelets jingle, shifting on her thin, brown arm, as she gives them to you with a smile. And you remember the old name of Jericho — the place of fragrance.

But when the night comes, you remember that it was called also the City of the Moon.

Its fascination increases as afternoon wanes and the evening light takes the plain, the Dead Sea, and all the mountains: Quarantana, the Mount of Temptation forever connected with Christ; the mountains of Gilead, of Edom, Pisgah, Nebo, from which Moses beheld the land of Canaan; the magical mountains of Moab. Then indeed romance is released from its secret abiding-place and God is felt in nature.

One evening toward sunset I left my little hotel and strolled out into the road that bordered the waste. Before me was a depression full of scattered thorn-bushes. To the left the road wound on toward the village. I followed it, walking slowly. A Bedouin, wearing a rose-colored turban, passed me. Under a thorn-tree a white dog was lying asleep. I met two Greek priests, with auburn hair floating over their shoulders, sauntering

near the church, which is surrounded by cypresses, and has a quantity of young, sharply green trees and shrubs in front of it. A little farther on I came upon a group of women in black, with some small children, chattering and laughing gaily. Just before sunset is the fashionable hour for the promenade in Jericho. From the pleasant garden of the Jordan Hotel, whose former proprietor was murdered while riding alone from Jericho to Jerusalem, came the dry sound of thrown dice. I looked, and under an arbor I saw a priest of the Latins playing backgammon with a young Syrian. The air was balmy and full of balsamic odors. In the village, among the one-storied, whitewashed or earth-colored houses, with slightly sloping roofs made of dried earth laid on sticks, there was quite a stir — in this home of all the languors. Goats were pattering homeward, stirring up the dust. Arabs were talking and laughing together round a cane arbor under which was a coffee-table. Donkeys were being unloaded and sacks flung aside. Boys were playing some mysterious game, squatting on their haunches in the dust. Before the serai some camels were protesting as they were forced to lie down. And the light of evening that fell upon Jericho, as the sun declined toward the mountains of Judea, made every object touching and beautiful, seemed even to beautify sounds.

As I went on through the village, going toward Elisha's Fountain, which is perhaps a mile away from

the houses, I felt more strongly than ever before the peculiar charm of an oasis, which is the essential charm of Jericho. For now the great Mountain of Temptation, with its beetling precipices, and terrific masses of rock, among which is perched a white monastery, began to assume an iron aspect that is specially characteristic of heights that are lifted above the sands. And all the hills near it, with their rounded tops like huge towers, their cruel ravines, their treeless flanks, looked as if for centuries those fires which congregate among the crested dunes had beaten pitilessly upon them. And when I gained the top of a small mound I saw that this kingdom of mauve roses, of mighty bananas, of bamboo forests, great oleanders, plane-trees, poplars, date-palms, cypresses, luxuriant vines, and scarlet and white flowers, with its limpid waters, its sunbirds, its laughing and dreaming brown people, was only a little kingdom on the frontiers of desolation. In whatever direction I looked the delicious green died away into the terrible pallors of a waterless world.

I sat for a while at the edge of Elisha's Fountain, which now looks like a neatly constructed swimming-bath. It is to this spring that the gardens of Jericho owe their luxuriance. The men of Jericho said to the Prophet, "The situation of this city is pleasant . . . but the water is naught, and the ground barren." And Elisha cast the contents of a new cruse of salt into the spring, "So the waters were healed unto this day."

Limpid and cool they shone at my feet in the last rays of the sun. But I could look only at the mountains, at the heights of Judea, very clear, in color now a soft blue, with some gashes of white, some notes of brown — and then at the mountains of Moab.

The mountains of Moab are the wonder and the glory of this land. And surely among all the ranges of the world they must stand out forever in the memory of him who has looked upon them. Their beauty is ineffable, and tradition seems to have given to that beauty a sort of consecration. From a sanctuary of Moab Moses gazed upon the Promised Land, and there he died and was buried. Before his death in Moab he made the great Covenant with the children of Israel, when God established them "for a people unto himself." Whereas the other ranges of mountains that guard the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea are stern and terrible, cruel in their fierce nakedness, the mountains of Moab seem always to hold themselves apart in a mood of exquisite reserve. Always a kind of lovely veil seems floating before them, through which, though they are often seen distinctly, they present themselves with a species of noble restraint, suggestive of a strange purity and dignity which may rightly be worshiped, but which must never be too nearly approached. And yet with this austerity there is blended a romance which is poignant. No other mountains are romantic as are the corrugated mountains of Moab. No other mystery is akin





THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA



to their mystery, as they watch over the Dead Sea at the frontiers of the land to which "He led them forth." And as behind the blue hills of Judea the sun goes down, and the last rays fade from the waters of Elisha's Fountain, and the green cloud of the tangled oasis darkens into a somber hue, in which gray and brown are mingled with black, in which the bright hues of the flowers are swallowed up, and the cypresses come to their own, the mountains of Moab seem to retire, folding softly their veil about them, into some region unknown to man, beyond our voices and the wandering of our feet, but to which our deepest longings draw mystically near.

In going from Jericho to the shore of the Dead Sea one passes across the waste, and travelers are escorted by a Bedouin guard fully armed. Ours was mounted upon a beautiful chestnut horse, and galloped in advance of us. The fertility of Jericho was swiftly left behind, and we were lost in a land of desolation that was terrible—a land that itself seemed utterly lost and forgotten by God. The sun shone brilliantly that day, though banks of cloud lay above the ranges of mountains. What must this region be like without the sun? Scattered over the waste are many white and ghastly hummocks, which look like manifestations of disease, as if the earth were sore afflicted and needed a healing hand. But this hand is not laid upon it. A white monastery, inhabited by monks of the Greek Church, stands up like a specter, the only habitation. Near the shore

of the sea, which shelves a very little, is some scrub. In the distance on our left the lower spurs of the hills discovered an extraordinary turmoil of pallors: grievous grays, yellows, pinky whites, sickly browns and leaden hues, and indescribable tints suggestive of suffering and horror. Have you ever seen the faces of a crowd struck suddenly to panic in the glare of a strong light? So looks this land — stricken, and even sinful, but wonderful. And always there are the mountains of Moab, romantic and almost savagely pure, ranged peak on peak behind their delicate veil, brooding now above the desolate waters that seem abandoned like the earth.

By the shore of the sea we found a wattled hut with a wild-looking Bedouin outside it. And here our guard left us, I suppose. For I did not see him — and I wanted to see him — on the further journey to Jordan. I walked for a little while by the sea. It was curled by tiny waves. The near water was pale green, the distant water dark green. On the pebbly beach a lot of drift-wood was lying. There was some orange-colored sand. Not a boat was visible. There was no sign of life any-where. I saw no birds. I compared this sea with Galilee. Galilee looks as if it lay under a hand lifted in blessing, the Dead Sea under a hand lifted in impreca-tion. One would fear to set sail upon it — even to voyage to the precipices of Moab, to discover the great secret.

When the waste took us again I was presently al-most startled to see a living thing moving in the dis-



MONASTERY OF ST. GEORGE IN THE WADI EL-KELT, DESERT OF JUDEA





tance. It was a camel, quite alone, going slowly toward the Dead Sea, as if it had been driven, like the scape-goat, into the wilderness bearing a burden of evil. As I watched it, it turned its head toward us, changed its direction, quickened its pace, and began to follow us. At the same moment my Arab coachman made a furious assault with the whip on his three horses, which broke into a gallop. My companion, a Syrian, spoke to him in Arabic, received a reply, and looked very grave. "What is the matter?" I asked. He told me that the camel which was following us was mad, and that our coachman had been warned of its presence in the wilderness by the Bedouin at the Dead Sea. As we galloped on, swaying from side to side, and often looking back at the beast, which steadily, though at a considerable distance, came after us, my friend regretted that we were not armed, and said that if we were overtaken we should be in a serious difficulty. It was then I looked for our Bedouin guard and did not find him. Fortunately his absence was not of consequence to us, for the maniac in our tracks was evidently too tired to come up with us, and we reached the Jordan in safety. Once there we were among trees and, even if we had still been pursued, could very easily have got away. Our predicament might have been disagreeable and even very dangerous, for a mad camel, once its attention is fastened on any moving object, will generally pursue it untiringly till it is overtaken. I have known an instance when one

followed an acquaintance of mine, who was mounted on a fine Arab horse, and overtook him after a pursuit that had lasted more than three hours. Luckily he was armed with a gun, and when he was forced to turn to bay disabled the brute.

We came to Jordan at the spot where the Russian pilgrims bathe, but not one was there that day, and the muddy river flowed undisturbed at the foot of the dense thickets of trees, willows, oaks, poplars, and tamarisks, that crowd to its edge and in many places lean over its waters as if desiring baptism. At the ford, where the pilgrims enter the river, and where it is supposed that Christ was baptized, there is a sandy shore, and here a wooden shed has been erected, and two guards have been placed. The river makes a curve here, and vanishes to right and left of you as you face it. Wishing to follow its course, I entered a large, flat-bottomed boat, and was rowed out by an Arab into the current. Almost as soon as we had passed the bend we were in absolute solitude on the brown water. The river is not very broad, not striking, but the trees, and brambles, and rank undergrowth were full of singing birds, the bright sunshine fell on the willows, the air was cool and light, the boatman sang as he plied his primitive oars. Soon we came to low cliffs, and beyond the trees saw a maze of low desert hills, brown, pink, white, gray, pale yellow. And I made my Arab lie on his oars, and for a long while I stayed there in a silence broken





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THE MOUNT OF TEMPTATION



only by the rapture of the birds at the edge of the sacred stream. Tradition held me captive. For I was gazing at the place from which Elijah is said to have been caught up by a whirlwind into heaven. Under the bank opposite to me there was a delicious, shadowy nook that reminded me of the Thames, of punts, and of English girls in white dresses. But those hills — how they spoke to me of the East! And Elijah had dwelt among them!

The boatman began his song once more. The chariot and the horses of fire vanished. I gave the signal. The boat swung round, and we went back slowly against the stream to the sandy place by the ford.

To the south of Jerusalem, and between five and six miles distant from it, Bethlehem lies on a limestone hill, in which are cut terraces planted with splendid olive-trees, fig- and other fruit-trees and vines. From a distance the gray town looks important and prosperous. It has a background of bare hills. It lies in a stony country. From it can be seen far away the mountains of Moab. On the highroad between it and Jerusalem at Easter-time there is an ever-flowing stream of pilgrims, and the narrow streets near the famous old church founded by Constantine the Great's mother, the Empress Helena, are thronged by Russians and travelers of all nations. As I joined this crowd, and threaded my way between the houses strongly built of stone, with thick walls and ample doorways, and the dome-shaped

roofs of stone for the construction of which the builders of Bethlehem are famous all over Palestine, I looked with interest at the natives of our Lord's birthplace.

In the Holy Land one passes from one little world to another with a swiftness that is almost bewildering. At one moment the world is Circassian, at another Jewish, at another Italian or German, Mohammedan or Druse. And even the native populations of the different towns in which Christianity prevails differ markedly from one another. The people of Bethlehem are distinguished by ability, energy, enterprise, and adaptability, and, I thought, looked a powerful and vigorous lot, fearless and self-reliant and perhaps almost too independent. Many of them emigrate, for they have no fear of travel and make excellent colonists. It is possible to come upon men of Bethlehem in eastern Africa and even in Haiti. Now for the first time I saw the remarkable head-dresses for which the married women of Bethlehem are famous. They are large and entirely conceal the hair. I was told that the foundation is a fez, stiffened and covered with cotton. Chains of silver on which are strung rows of silver coins ornament the front, and a great white veil made of cotton gives the finishing touch. Strongly built and active, the matrons of Bethlehem look very imposing as they go about their affairs, and I should scarcely think they live in great subjection to their husbands. That they make alarming mothers-in-law I can well believe. There is a proverb in Palestine, "Were



THE DEAD SEA AND THE MOUNTAINS OF MOAB





the mother-in-law to love her daughter-in-law, dogs would go into paradise."

The Church of the Holy Nativity is entered through a doorway so small that I had to bend my head in order to pass through it. It is roofed with wood cut from the cedars of Lebanon, has double rows of yellow pillars, and is very large and very simple, and fine in its simplicity. Here and there I came upon a Turkish soldier standing patiently, gun in hand, to keep Christian dogs in order. For in this church, built on the spot where tradition places the birth of Christ, there is often brawling and fighting as in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Joint ownership is here, as in Jerusalem, the main cause of all the trouble. The church with its holy place belongs to the Latins, the Greeks, and the Armenians, and the three religions, needless to say, do not dwell together in peace. When I was in Bethlehem I saw evidence of the rights of the Armenians, for when I made my way to the cavern in which it is believed that our Saviour was born, I found it occupied by Armenian priests who were holding an elaborate service.

To reach this sacred cavern, round and over which the great church has been built, you pass through a screen into a rather gorgeous chapel belonging to the Greeks, gay with sacred pictures, and glittering with gold and silver and hanging lamps, roofed with cedar, and paved with marble, and come to two flights of marble steps forming a half-moon. These steps are rather

narrow and lead down into the cavern, which is in the living rock. When I reached them I heard a sound of chanting in a man's deep voice. I paused, and below me, in a dimness revealed by the lighted candles held by Russian pilgrims standing or sitting upon the steps, I saw two Armenian priests, dressed in pink, white, red, and gold vestments, with long hair and heavy beards. They also held candles and books, and were loudly worshiping before a silver star. Beside them, impassive, handsome, gun in hand, fez on head, stood an immensely tall Turkish soldier, with half-shut eyes, weary no doubt with the long sentry duty which in Palestine is the Turkish soldier's lot during Holy Week and at Easter. The loud voices of the priests ceased, and I heard boys singing. Then again the priests raised their somber chants, one answering the other. I descended softly between the Russians, who, absorbed, as they always are, did not glance at me, and I, too, stood before the star. It is inlaid in marble, is of silver, and is bordered by the solemn inscription, "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est." The place where it lies is called the Recess of the Nativity, and the small space before it, where people were kneeling, is called the Chapel of the Manger. The whole cavern is named the Chapel of the Nativity. Here it is believed that the Magi came with their offerings, and their altar is here. Lamps belonging to the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians burn here night and day as year follows after year. The



CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, BETHLEHEM



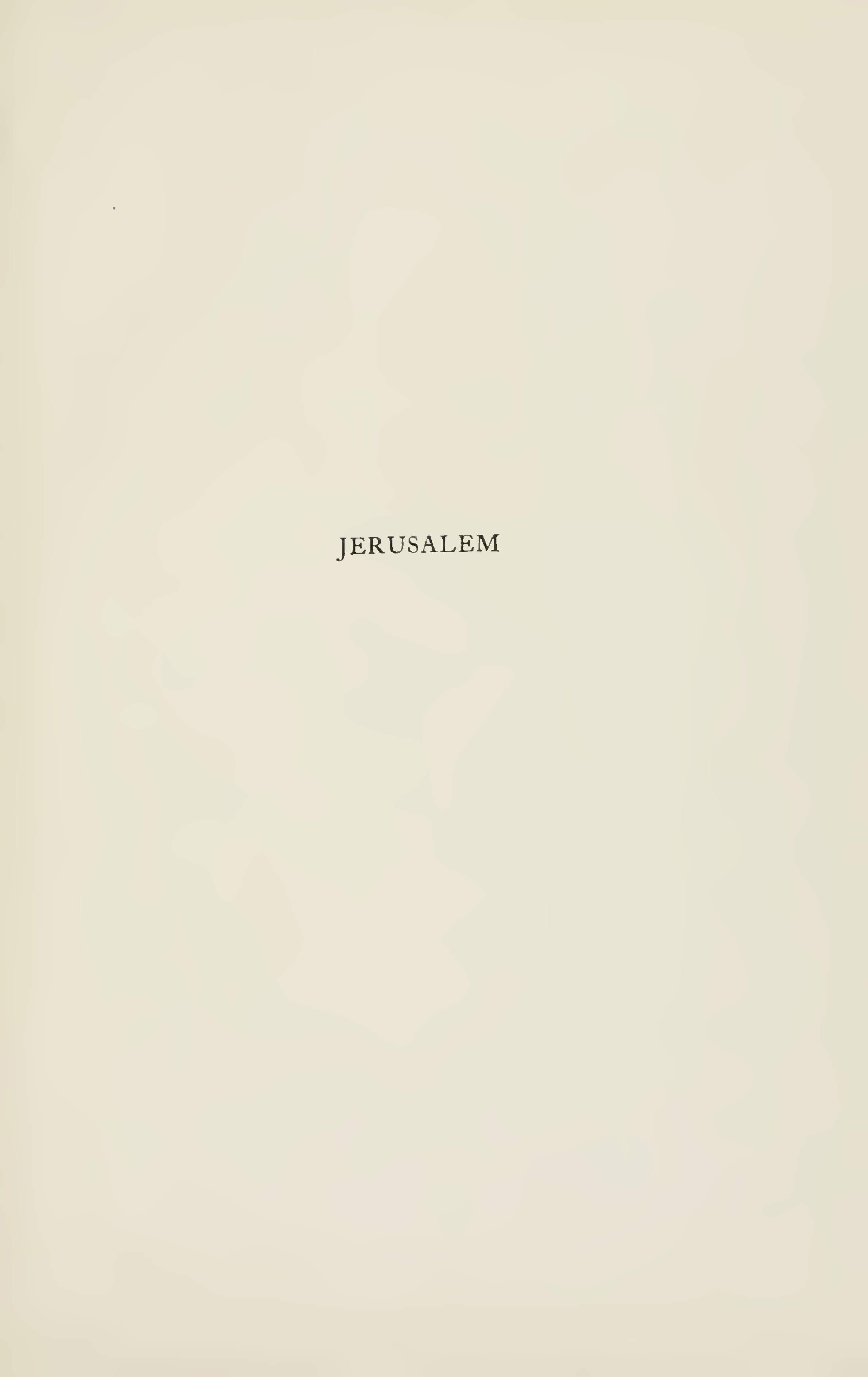
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low roof is draped, and parts of the walls are draped in blue and silver, and there is a casing of marble brought from Italy. The service was long and monotonous, but I did not regret it. The priests' and the boys' voices sounded strange and almost unearthly in the heart of this rock consecrated by the simple faith of thousands. Under the gold and silver lamps the barbaric vestments shone and gleamed as the priests moved to and fro, bowed, kneeled, or stood upright. The Turkish soldier, who was on a tiny platform of wood, stared with his heavy eyes at the star. Crouched on the rows of steps, lit by their flickering candles, the Russian pilgrims wept, crossed themselves, moved their old lips in the prayers of their church, and perhaps also in prayers that were spontaneously born at this supreme moment in their peasant lives in their own hearts. And the legend by the star held the eyes and the soul: "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est."

At such moments man seems to hold within him an imperative need to accept and believe. Only when the voices died away, when the priests and the pilgrims were gone, when I ascended once more into the nave of the great church, which is said to be the oldest nave in Christendom, was I able to remember that probably Christ was not born in a cave of the rock. As to the visit and adoration of the Magi, St. Matthew wrote of it, "And when they"—the Magi—"were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his

mother, and fell down, and worshipped him." The tradition concerning the cave of the silver star is therefore probably erroneous. Be it so. But faith and worship have made the Chapel of the Nativity in Bethlehem forever sacred. For there thousands have seen the star in the East and, having seen, have gone to their own homes, carrying with them a belief made suddenly more vital, more serene, made bright as the lamps that ceaselessly burn above those solemn words in the marble beneath the impending rock: "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est."



JERUSALEM







THE WAILING-PLACE OF THE JEWS, JERUSALEM



VI

JERUSALEM

DAMASCUS and Jerusalem — silken garment and hair shirt! The one, a radiant city of dream held in the heart of the woods, sank away from me into a romantic mystery of blue; the other, an austere city of reality, rose before me on its stony and sterile hills, bleak, almost forbidding, under a black sky, wind-swept, with a scud of rain coming up to it from the Mount of Olives, where the Russian tower lifted itself grimly toward the traveling clouds. Like gashes made in the earth by some weapon of a giant, the ravines showed themselves below it. About it the inhospitable, waterless country rolled away toward the Dead Sea, toward Jaffa and the Mediterranean, toward the mountains of Galilee. Gone were the prairies covered with flowers, gone were the golden plains, the thickets of oaks, the languorous, grassy slopes, the silver, murmuring streams. This was a world of windy bareness, of almost cruel sterility, in summer surely of parching heat.

I rode into Jerusalem by the Nablus route, through the new town without the walls, past the Anglican bishop's palace and school-house, leaving on my right a modern quarter inhabited by Jews. Descending a hill into a slimy street in which more Jews, clad in plush and velvet coats of gaudy colors and wearing velvet hats bordered with fur, were picking their way through thick mud among puddles of yellowish rain-water, I drew up before a German hotel. I had reached my journey's end: I was in the Holy City.

That first day Jerusalem almost repelled me; but I did not know it. Later I was taken captive by the spell of its amazing complexity. Its power to interest almost overwhelmed me. Jerusalem is interesting as no other city is interesting, and that quality of it increases its grip upon you day by day, waking up the intellect, stirring the faculties to an almost untiring activity — an activity that perhaps becomes feverish at the feverish time of Easter. In Jerusalem surely the most sleepy mind must wake, the most phlegmatic temperament be whipped to a strong alertness. Conflict seems in the air, a turmoil proceeding rather from the souls than from the bodies of men. By their great wall the Jews wail day after day. They weep for vanished power, vanished glory, a possession taken from them. But there is much else to weep for in the city whose name means foundation or habitation of peace, where Moslems keep the gate of the Holy Sepulcher, and Turkish soldiers with

loaded muskets hold in check the furious passions of Christians.

For thirty-eight centuries Jerusalem has been famous in history. On the day of my arrival I felt as if I were in the suburb of some strange, pale, and shabby modern town. In fact, almost the whole of antique Jerusalem lies buried beneath your feet as you walk through the narrow ways, under the arches of stone, down the slippery flights of steps, and among the shadows of the bazaars. Nevertheless, when I saw the towering walls of Solyman the Magnificent, when I passed within their circle and found myself in the crowded Christian and David streets, when I stood in the court of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher among the adoring pilgrims and those who profit by their religious ecstasies, when I wandered through the immense Haram esh-Sherif, or inclosure of the Temple, when I sat within the brilliant mystery that is the Dome of the Rock, when I stood among the Jews by the huge wall of their wailing-place, I felt as it were a breathing of hoary age about me. And I saw courses of stone on which perhaps the eyes of Solomon once looked, and beneath arches of living rock I trod, perhaps, almost in the footsteps of David.

Upon Mount Scopus an Englishman has built himself a house. One windy day of April I paused not far from it and looked across the Valley of the Kedron to the Holy City. It was pale under the stormy sky, spread out on its limestone ridge, with its cruel hills about it.

The scattered groves of its olives scarcely mitigated the austerity of its aspect — an austerity due much more to its peculiarly barren surroundings than to the grouping of its buildings, their colors, or their forms. The city looked large, — indeed, like an important capital, — with its masses of gray and sand-yellow houses, crowned with sloping roofs of a dim red shading sometimes into pink, with its cupolas and minarets, its church towers, its severe but imposing hospices, its domes of the Rock, of El-Aksa, and of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The white tower and the small white dome of the new German church stood out, and on Mount Zion rose the very imposing, almost flamboyant German Catholic church. And as in Nazareth the Russian hospice was frankly dominating, so in Jerusalem now France asserted herself, her gigantic Hospice of Notre Dame, with its towers and spreading wings, making from here the buildings set up for the pilgrims of other nations seem of little or no importance. The city wall was plainly marked above the edge of the valley. Far off were the shadowy mountains of Judea.

There came a rift in the clouds. A pale sunshine fell upon the city, giving it for a moment a changed look of almost delicate brilliance. Then the clouds closed once more — clouds as lead-colored as that dome shielding the Holy Sepulcher, sunk in the heart of Jerusalem, so poor from here, so almost mean compared with the great Dome of the Rock, yet magnetic, attracting the



THE POOL OF HEZEKIAH, JERUSALEM





eyes and the mind. It seemed to crouch, as if it would get close to a precious thing—to that house of marble beneath it where, so thousands upon thousands believe, the body of Christ was laid in the rock-hewn tomb. It looked like a dome of tender protection, and I watched it till the rest of the city seemed blotted out, and I saw only that roof of lead beneath the leaden sky.

The two centers of interest in Jerusalem are the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Dome of the Rock within the inclosure of the Haram esh-Sherif; one the most sacred place in Palestine for all Christians, the other the most sacred place in Palestine for all Moslems. The latter is incomparably the most beautiful and most beautifully placed building in Jerusalem.

The Mohammedans of old days, like the ancient Greeks, knew how greatly the value of a noble or lovely mosque or temple is enhanced by placing it properly. The Greeks chose the positions of their temples with sheer genius. The Mohammedans, caring less for dominant heights, had a passion for great spaces. Perhaps they drew this from the desert.

Detached beauty rising out of the bosom of calm—this seems to have been the ideal of the Mohammedans who created the great mosques of the Eastern world. And there is a magical calm in the huge Haram inclosure.

One morning, escaping out of the turmoil of Jewish and Christian Jerusalem, I entered in by the St. Ste-

phen's Gate, passed up the slightly ascending pathway of stone to the steps and the stone platform, under the graceful arch, with its slight columns, between the stone buildings with cupolas which join the walls on either hand, and stood still for a moment near the three large maize-trees in full leaf which threw a patch of shade almost to my feet. The city lay on my right. Close to me were the backs of the yellow houses built on the site where the Levites once lived. A shrill and gay sound of Turkish military music came to me from beyond these dwellings. When it had died away, I went on into the great inner court, with the white pavement, and sat down on a block of stone.

The inclosure was almost empty. In the sunlit distance a small band of students sauntered slowly in the direction of the Golden Gate; an old pilgrim in a long, brown garment bent over a fountain; two Arabs, squatting by the wrinkled trunk of an olive-tree, stared gravely before them. No longer did Turkish trumpets disturb the marvelous peace that reigns in the Haram. I drank it in for a moment, and then I looked.

Not far from me I saw a great building of marble and porcelain, of pearl-colored, pale yellow, gray, and white marble, of porcelain purple, turquoise blue, bright yellow, and deep green. In shape it was octagonal, each of the sides measuring sixty-seven feet; and it was crowned by a mighty dome, beneath which were pointed windows filled with glass like jewels. Porches of marble

and porcelain projected from it. Near it stood a small marvel of loveliness made of the same precious materials—the little Dome of the Chain, or, as a Mohammedan called it to me, "the Mother of the Mosque." This delicate and almost ethereal creation, with its two rows of columns, its small dome and crescent, is a kiosk, the home of the airs, the sunbeams, and the happy shadows. It produced upon me the effect of a sweet harmony. Yet when one examines it carefully, one finds within it traces of various architectures, Hebrew and Byzantine, Greek and Roman. God, the Moslems say, once stretched a chain across the entrance of this kiosk which, if touched by a liar, broke.

Strongly the sun was shining that morning, almost as if fiercely determined to show me every detail of mosque and mother. Neither needed to fear the revelation. If there is any combination of materials more beautiful, more enticing, than marble and porcelain, I do not know, and cannot imagine it. One is exquisitely cool, the other softly brilliant. Sunbeams seem to endow both with a sort of mysterious life.

Presently I entered into the mosque, and was enfolded by the shadows that kept the immense block of stone to which, so devout Moslems believe, pilgrim-angels were wont to come more than a thousand years before Adam was made from a pinch of dust. The silence within was intense—a silence some day to be broken by the trumpet of Israfeel announcing the resurrection

morning. Surrounded by gilding and precious marbles, by tiles and mosaics, by inscriptions and elaborately painted stucco, by beautiful hanging-lamps and enormous chandeliers, I found the rock, like a couchant, gray-brown monster, rugged, uncouth, and severe, stretched out in a harsh repose.

Innumerable traditions cluster about it. It is said to cover an abyss in which are contained all the waters of the Flood, to have supported the Ark of the Covenant when they subsided, to have been the scene of Abraham's preparation for the sacrifice of Isaac, to have been anointed by Jacob, to be the foundation-stone of the world, to have been held down forcibly by the Angel Gabriel when it strove to follow Mohammed, who, mounted upon his miraculous horse, El-Burak, from the spot where it lies ascended into heaven. And upon it is supposed to have been divinely written the name of God.

The great shrine which shelters it is worthy to shelter such a fame. That first day I thought it gloriously beautiful, and subsequent visits only deepened my admiration of it. The proportions seem to me perfect. The extremely elaborate and complicated decoration — excepting only part of the roof, the bright gold and sealing-wax red of which I thought too gaudy — is amazingly effective and harmonious and full of a sort of rich and imaginative mystery. The sixteenth-century glass, and the mosaics covering the lower part of the interior



THE DOME OF THE ROCK, JERUSALEM



From a photograph by American Colony, Jerusalem



of the dome, sparkling diamond-like against a background of dull gold, are superb. The general color effect is a luminous mystery of pearl and black, gold and dim blue-green, lit up by the glint and gleam of mosaics like jewels. There is also a good deal of strong red. The pillars are made of dark marbles with brilliantly gilded capitals. The screen round the rock is of wood. It is bordered by a narrow passageway paved with marble, on the farther side of which is a tall screen of wrought-iron, heavily gilded, and broken up by columns. On a platform outside this second screen is a gigantic copy of the Koran, covered with a green cloth, and said to be almost the largest in existence. By it stand wooden trays for the slippers of worshipers.

I descended under the Sacred Rock, which is hollowed out, and stood in a sort of cavern upon a marble floor, while my guide pointed out in the stone a huge dent supposed to have been made by the head of Mohammed when he worshiped there. A plaque in the floor indicates the place from which the souls of the good will go up to heaven on judgment-day. All around are votive lamps. I bent my head to listen to the far-off roaring of the imprisoned waters of the Flood, but no sound reached my ears. At this moment a Moslem whispered to me that bad spirits haunt the darkness beneath the rock, so I thought it wise to ascend into the mosque, and after lingering in it for a long while, I came away from it convinced that very few buildings in the

world can compare with it for beauty and splendor. In one respect it is unique. For as in that wonderful scene in the first act of "Parsifal" the poorly dressed, simple figure of the gazing and wondering boy increases tenfold the effect upon the audience of the marvels at which he is gazing, so in the Dome of the Rock the rock itself gives almost a poignant value to the glories surrounding it. Contrast supplies those wings on which alone beauty rises to the uttermost peaks of triumph. And surely the contrast between the rock and the Dome of the Rock is unique. This marvel of the Eastern world is often wrongly called the Mosque of Omar. The real Mosque of Omar is close to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

The vast inclosure of the Haram contains also, with various lesser buildings, the Mosque of El-Aksa, in basilica form, about which controversy has raged; some declaring it to be almost identical with the church set up to the glory of the Virgin by the Emperor Justinian, while De Voguë and others convinced themselves that it is completely Arab, though founded on the site of a church, and still others, including Fergusson, have protested that it was erected by the Caliph Abd El-Melek, and that neither the Mary, nor any other church, ever stood on the spot it covers. Earthquakes have damaged it, and it has been rebuilt and repaired from time to time. It is very large, but the interior, though finely proportioned, is neither very beautiful nor interesting as



THE MOUNT OF OLIVES AS SEEN FROM JERUSALEM





a whole. Much of the dome, however, is lovely. It is heavily incrusted with gold. There is some splendid glass, and one of the most exquisite pulpits I have ever seen, in cedar and ivory. Quite alone, before the marble niche that indicates the direction of Mecca, I found a wild Bedouin from Moab, clad in black and red garments, with a sheepskin hung over his shoulders, praying. And as I watched him for a moment, gazing with his piercing eyes into the distance, as if he would traverse the spaces and look upon the sacred city, I thought of his mysterious mountains keeping guard by the Dead Sea. He bowed down, and with his forehead touched the carpet on which he knelt; and at that moment I realized the meaning of the words "Our Father" as I had never realized them before.

As I was leaving the mosque I came upon a very old Nubian. He was reclining on a sheepskin mat, with a venerable white coat tied over his head, writing with red ink in Arabic upon a thin sheet of wood, and singing to himself. Near to him was a Turk repeating passages from the Koran. The negro is a miracle-man and spends his life in the mosque, always reposing upon his mat, writing charms and singing. He traced one for me very slowly, holding a piece of paper against his sheet of wood, and, after it was covered, exposing it to the air. I took it away inclosed in a silver box.

More than once, after happy hours in the Haram, when perhaps a little weary of wandering from place to

place,—from the Golden Gate to the Gate of Paradise, from fountain to fountain, from the Garden of Cypresses to the mysterious "Solomon's Stables," where once the steeds of Crusaders were tied up to rings of stone which may still be seen, from the "Cradle of Christ" to the "Cradle of David," niches surmounted by domes,—I made my way to the white and airy one-roomed dwelling of Sheik Kalil el-Danef, "chef de la Mosquée," as he names himself on his card. The handsome, elderly man, with venerable beard and lovely green turban, always welcomed me with a noble civility. Dressed in a striped *mudarrabieh* and a *kumbaz*, or tight-fitting inner garment of gray silk powdered with golden flowers, falling to the feet, he preceded me to the divan, while his stalwart son, a keeper of the Dome of the Rock, sauntered to the little cupboard to get out the coffee-cups and the cigarettes. And there we smoked and sipped in an airy peace, looking out to the Mount of Olives, with its few trees and its many buildings. Sometimes, lifting his tall staff of office of dark wood and silver, the sheik would tell how the German Emperor sat there with him and spoke of the glories of the Eastern world. And then again silence would fall, and against the whitewashed walls the pale smoke-wreaths would curl up, and the strange stillness and peace of Islam would gather about us—a stillness and peace made beautiful and strange not only by the absence from the little room of movement and sound, but also by the presence within





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THE AKSA MOSQUE, JERUSALEM



it of souls of the type that knows how to resign, and, because of that knowledge, how to accept.

I have said that from this place of peace we looked out on the Mount of Olives. Upon its slopes, close to Mount Scopus, there are olive-trees, but they make little effect to-day. Indeed, they seem almost inappropriate. For no longer is this sacred hill a place of retirement. It is decorated—or defaced?—with buildings. The huge Russian tower proclaims that men, blatant, alas! even in their religion, have made Olivet a center not only of faith, but also of ostentation. Below, near the roadside, the Garden of Gethsemane, with its neat inclosing wall, its glass house, its wire-fenced beds of well-ordered, well-tended flowers,—stiff stocks, violets, pansies, pots of cyclamens, china asters,—is smart and trim as an opulent merchant's garden on the outskirts of his native city. The Franciscan fathers have carefully shored up the venerable olive-trees, which look strangely out of place, like strayed veterans, in the midst of their gay surroundings. Iron railings and wire nettings denote the determination of property-owners to keep safely all they possess. And though before the stations of the cross which surround the inclosure, and before the Agony in marble, with its creepers hanging about it, all day long the pilgrims from Russia kneel and bedew the earth with their tears, it is difficult to realize, as one pauses before the conservatory or looks at the pansies over the wire protections, that one stands in Gethsemane.

From the Russians who weep in Gethsemane one may go down into the city to the Jews who weep in their wailing-place. It is strange and interesting to compare the two griefs. Nothing in the Holy Land touched me so much as the simple faith, the deep reverence, the heartfelt love and sorrow, of the Russian pilgrims. Totally free from self-consciousness, like children they show all the feelings of their hearts. In all the holy places they kiss the ground. Wherever they think the Saviour suffered or was sad, they weep to-day, men and women alike. The Jews are prouder, are more self-conscious; yet every time I visited their wailing-place I felt that their grief, too, in its different, less touching way, was often genuine.

The wailing-place is a rather narrow paved alley between a whitewashed wall and a gigantic ancient wall formed of huge blocks of uncemented stone, worn away, so it is said, by kissing lips. Weeds sprout in places in the numerous crevices and cracks. In the alley are wooden benches. The Jews, both men and women, go there not only on Fridays, but on all the days of the week. Standing in rows close to the great wall, with their faces toward it and almost touching it, they read their Hebrew books of prayer, murmur the words aloud, weep, bow, sometimes almost to the earth, and often press their lips fervently against the blocks of stone. The women wear shawls and keep by themselves at the ends of the alley. The men cluster in the middle. Behind





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OVER JERUSALEM TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES



these mourners a blind Moslem, conducted by a Jew, often goes to and fro demanding alms from the onlookers. The wailing-place is in the Tyropœon Valley, and the great wall is at the west side of the temple area. Whereas the Russian pilgrims never even glance at those who watch their tears,—such at least is my experience of them,—the Jews are often obviously aware of the interest their mourning creates. I have seen them peep furtively round to take observations, and return to their lamentations with what seemed a greater zest when they knew the eyes of strangers were upon them. Nevertheless, many of them really weep, pray with earnestness, and rock themselves to and fro as if genuinely tormented. But the Jew is by nature acutely aware of the things and people about him. The Russian peasant is not.

Jerusalem without, and Jerusalem within, the walls of Solyman are so different from each other that at first I had difficulty in connecting them in my mind as the two halves of one whole. The outer Jerusalem has a suburban and oddly livid aspect, with its many huge buildings, hospitals, churches, schools, and convents, built solidly of light-colored stone, with its muddy or dusty roads full of pale Jews, many of them dressed in yellow. As I rode into it by the Nablus Road I received a sort of sickly, almost bilious impression from it, and this impression remained with me. There is a want of repose for the eyes. In sunshine there is a glare; in bad

weather,—and when I was in Jerusalem, in April, the weather was seldom fine,—a peculiar ghastliness such as I cannot remember having noticed in any other town. The wind often blows hard, driving the long garments of the Jews against their thin legs, flattening the fur round their hats, toying almost brutally with the tufts of fair hair trained forward against their bloodless and hollow cheeks. Whenever I think of the new Jerusalem my eyes mechanically blink, and, as in a vision, I see before me various pallors: whites, yellows, yellow grays, yellow browns, pinky reds, pale dust, pale mud, pale puddles, white-faced men in yellow moving with an air of combined defiance and surreptitious servility along roads that look suburban, between large, light-colored, new houses.

But, once within the mighty walls, a fascination of the East comes upon one suddenly, almost sharply. The so-called streets are paved, or sometimes unpaved, alleys that no carriage can enter, though donkeys slither down them, and camels pass slowly by, between the dusky bazaars, with heavy softness, under the innumerable arches of stone that are characteristic of the city. The principal streets are the David Street, the Christian Street, and the Street of the Palace, or Via Dolorosa, spanned by the celebrated arch called the Ecce Homo Arch. In this last many sites are pointed out to this day as connected with the Crucifixion; for down it our Saviour is supposed to have gone on the way to Calvary.





ABSALOM'S TOMB, JERUSALEM



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Jerusalem is the home of supposition rather than the home of ascertained truth. More is probably taken "on trust" there than in any other city in the world. "Here," says some pious monk, "Pilate took Jesus and, saying, 'Behold the man!' showed him to the clamoring crowd." "And here," declares a Greek priest, with a tall, black hat and flowing, auburn hair and beard, "the cross was laid upon his sacred shoulders." In the Via Dolorosa there are fourteen tablets to mark the stations of the cross, but perhaps it is needless to say that the way trodden by the feet of Christ is hidden far down beneath the dust and accumulated rubbish of the centuries. At this day no one knows where are the sites of the stations of the cross, but innumerable people solemnly claim to know, and thousands upon thousands are found every year to believe their fantastic statements.

It is both touching and absurd, as one wanders through the ways in the midst of the amazing confusion, bustle, intimacy, and secretive reserve to be found only in an Eastern city, to see the groups of pausing pilgrims, many of them moved to the very depths of their natures, listening and gazing, weeping and adoring, while guides and monks declaim lies almost consecrated by long usage. By that broken column Christ sank down to the ground beneath the heavy weight of the cross: the pilgrims sink down to kiss the spot. There stood the dwelling of Pilate, and there the dwelling of Dives. At

the corner of this alley our Lord encountered his mother; a little farther on St. Veronica with her handkerchief wiped from his brow the bloody sweat; over there, by the monastery now occupied by the Copts, a second time the Saviour sank down to earth. With imaginations aflame, multitudes of pilgrims listen and believe. Have they not come across the lands and the seas to stand in these narrow alleys, to see, to hear, to accept? Would it not be cruel to tell them the plain truth, that the Jerusalem of our Lord is buried far down beneath the mud, the stones, or the dust to which they press their trembling lips? For some of us it is enough to know that in these depressions and on these stony hills was placed the ancient city where the greatest tragedy of the world was enacted. But for many it is not enough. So legend steps in. The mouths of men utter lies, and the minds of men receive them and cherish them.

It is interesting to walk outside the city, round the huge walls, and I did this more than once, my enjoyment upon one occasion being disturbed by a persistent fusillade of small stones which greeted me from above, where no doubt some hidden Moslem was lying in wait to pepper Christian dogs. The walls are nearly forty feet high, tremendously solid, and pierced by seven gates. For hundreds of years the eighth gateway has been filled up with a mass of stone. The bleakness of the inhospitable and melancholy country in the midst of

which Jerusalem lies reveals itself nakedly as one passes by above the ravines, looking down now into the Valley of Hinnom, with the Mount of Evil Counsel above it, now into the Valley of the Kedron watched over by the Mount of Olives. Bare are the rounded hills. The huge and straggling village of Siloam on the Hill of Offense shows earth-colored and gray under the gray sky. Near by, within easy reach of two sacred places much visited by pilgrims, the Fountain of the Virgin, and the pool where the man who had been blind from his birth received his sight, is a huge building set up by Roman Catholics. The asceticism of religion is suggested by the surroundings of Jerusalem, by the almost treeless heights from which pale rocks bristle up, by the many arid plots of ground inclosed by walls of stone, by the very shapes of the hills, not fierce, not fantastic, but gravely cold, a little rigid, a little sad, and curiously reserved in their outlines. And in this aridity, this sadness of rounded hills and pallid rocks, men have elected to build themselves homes, and women to retreat from the glories of the world. From beneath the great walls of Jerusalem one looks into the grayness across the ravines, and one sees dwellings of Russians, Benedictine monks, and Carmelite nuns. There is the Church of the Dominus Flevit, there the Church of the Ascension, there the Church of the Pater, there the elaborate Russian church, with its brightly gilded pinnacles and domes shining above Gethsemane when a gleam of the sun

breaks forth. And the mighty Russian tower higher up on the Mount of Olives seems proudly to assert the dominion in Jerusalem of the bishops and priests of the Greek Orthodox Church. On the hill to the north, near the Grotto of Jeremiah, bloom the shrubs and flowers before the so-called "Garden Tomb," where some suppose that our Lord was buried in a dark niche of the rock, though I believe the assertion that General Gordon felt sure that this was Golgotha is erroneous. Not far off is a traditional site of the stoning of St. Stephen. From Mount Moriah, backed by the huge wall inclosing the Haram esh-Sherif, where goats are happily rubbing themselves against blocks of stone which, I was assured, dated from the days of Solomon, you look right into the Garden of Gethsemane, and can see a train of camels passing slowly between the rocks toward the way where the man fell among thieves.

The Church of the Pater, built by the Princess Latour d'Auvergne on the spot where Christ is said to have given the Lord's Prayer to the disciples, is not beautiful, but the Cloisters of the Lord's Prayer, surrounding a garden full of irises, are interesting and touching. Standing there in the arcade, near the white marble tomb of the princess, and the niche in which is an urn containing her father's heart, I thought of the wonderful musical impression I received when I first heard Elgar's setting of the Lord's Prayer in "The Kingdom"—an impression of the universality of the great fatherhood,





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THE KEDRON VALLEY, SILOAM, AND THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

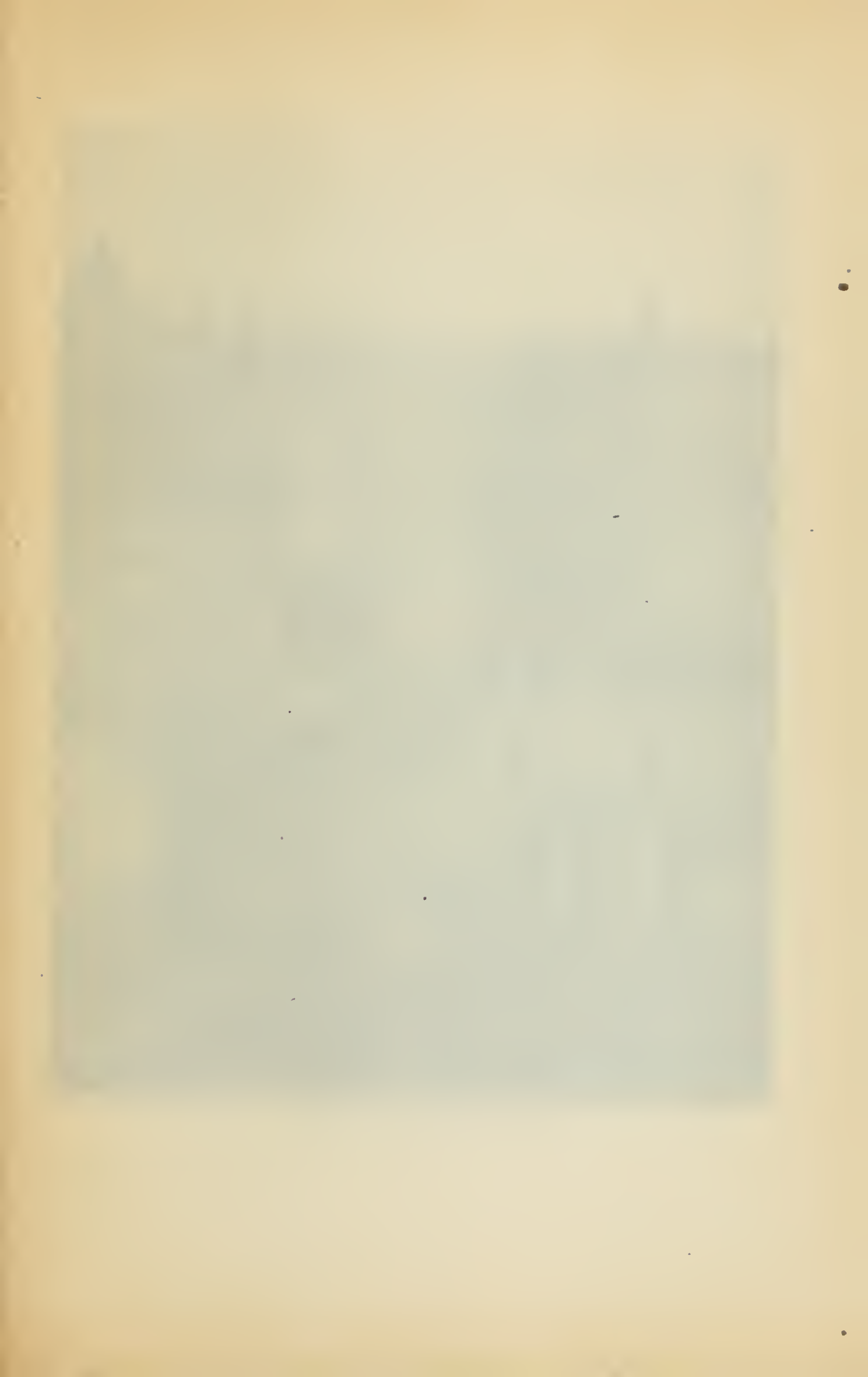


of the one Shepherd into whose flock the Bedouin is gathered with the American, the Negro with the Englishman, the Moslem who sits by his brazier at the gate of the Holy Sepulcher with the Greek from the distant island of the blue Mediterranean Sea, who says his mass in the marble sanctuary. For all round these cloisters, on the walls, framed in fine tiles, covered with red and blue flowers, with open leaves on a white ground, are plaques, and each plaque presents the universal prayer in a different language. There are thirty-two of these plaques. The irises, moving in the soft wind, bend toward the thirty-two "Our Fathers." The white, recumbent figure of the princess rests with folded hands. Close by, in a narrow building from which they never issue forth, twenty-one Carmelite nuns are perpetually praying. From the cloisters it is only a step to the rock-hewn Chapel of the Credo, where, according to tradition, the first great "I believe" was spoken. As I went from one to the other, Elgar's music seemed sounding in my ears, and I saw again the Bedouin from Moab, in his red and black and his sheepskin, with his fierce eyes set toward Mecca, adoring the Universal Father in the El-Aksa Mosque.

The Tomb of the Virgin in the Valley of Jehoshaphat is always swarming with eager pilgrims, who descend cautiously in the almost mystic darkness to the church in the grotto, gleaming faintly with tiny lights from the lamps of gold and silver which hang from the

low and cavernous roof. Upon the long flight of steps which leads to this sacred spot may be found people of all nationalities, going stealthily, as if under the influence of awe, toward the barbaric shrine which, seen vaguely from above, always recalled to me my childish imaginings of the Cave of Aladdin. Even Mohammedans wearing green turbans are to be found upon these steps. Sometimes the nostrils are greeted with the acrid scent of incense, and the ears with the sound of singing. Processions come and go, headed by priests wearing gorgeous vestments. In the Cavern of the Agony close by the sweet and childlike voices of Russian women are often lifted in hymns interrupted by weeping and lamentations; for between those walls of rock Jesus is supposed to have agonized till the bloody sweat fell from his body to the ground.

Everywhere in and about Jerusalem one is confronted by rock hallowed by tradition, bedewed by the tears, kissed by the lips, saluted by the voices, of thousands upon thousands of pilgrims. Of the rock in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher I shall speak in another place. Of the rock in the dome of the Haram esh-Sherif I have already spoken. The new imprisonment of Christ, the Apostles' cave, where it is believed that the Apostles concealed themselves during the Crucifixion, the cotton grotto, the Grotto of Jeremiah, and the Garden Tomb, are among the innumerable famous places of the rocks perpetually haunted by travelers and worshipers. The



THE DAMASCUS GATE, JERUSALEM



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Garden Tomb is kept by a man from the North, I believe a Dane, who showed me round the pleasant inclosure adjoining the chamber in the rock, and stood gravely, even rather sadly, regarding his flowers and shrubs while I penetrated within. He told me afterward that he had lived there for years with his wife, but that she had recently died, and he felt terribly alone. "This is not my country," he said I wondered, but did not ask, whether he was a believer in the tradition connected with the empty chamber of which he was the guardian. In Jerusalem controversy still rages as to where the body of Christ really lay until the Resurrection. The greater number of those whom I met disbelieved in the Garden Tomb and believed that the real tomb was situated not far from the site, or actually on the site, of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. When I visited the new imprisonment of Christ, chambers in the living rock now strangely included, as are various other rock-hewn sanctuaries, in a modern building, I heard, when I was about to penetrate into the low and dark grotto in which our Lord is said to have been imprisoned and kept for a time by the order of Pilate, a soft and strangely, innocently sweet voice singing. I stood for some minutes listening, wondering whether the singer was a child. Then I went on softly. In a small and low cavern, containing a tiny wooden altar, I found an old Russian peasant woman. She had set a votive candle upon the altar. This was her only light.

Dressed in a sort of tunic of some coarse and dark stuff, with a short skirt and thick woolen leggins, she was kneeling on the hard ground, holding a small book in her wrinkled hands and singing. Now and then the tears rolled down her cheeks. When I came in she did not look at me. I stayed for some time with her in the cavern. I do not think she knew I was there. Her soul was with Christ, imprisoned, maltreated, for the sake of all the poor peasants of Russia, of all the poor peasants of all lands. And the innocent tenderness of her heart, the gratitude, the sorrow, the faith of her soul, sent such an indescribable sweetness, almost as of virginal youth, into her voice, that I shall not forget it. The votive candle on the tiny wooden altar burned low. I left her singing alone, yet surely with one hearer.

In Jerusalem the Mohammedans are in possession not only of the Place of the Temple, but of various traditional holy places. Perhaps the chief of these is the scene of the Last Supper. This famous site, which is visited by every pilgrim, is connected also with the miracle of Pentecost, with the appearance of Christ after the Resurrection, with the death of the Virgin Mary, and with the burial of David. It is the "dry and sunny mount" of Zion which was sanctified by these events, and "the vaulted Gothic chamber" to which so many thousands of persons from all lands come every year is certainly hallowed by their belief, if by nothing else. Only a copy of the tomb of David is shown to Chris-

tians. The huge stone sarcophagus, shrouded in tapestries, which is claimed to be his burial-place may not be visited. It lies under a canopy in the lowest of the three chambers which, with other buildings, are collectively called En-Nebi Daud. Once the Franciscan fathers dominated Mount Zion, but now the Moslems bear rule there. And where St. Stephen was stoned to death they exercise an authority not wholly free from arrogance over those whom, if one may judge by their demeanor and their very expressive glances, they would not be sorry to send to a similar martyrdom. For human passions run riot in Jerusalem. The voice of one religion clamors against the voice of another. One night in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher I heard the hymns of "Holy Russia" clashing with the chants of the Franciscans. Discord echoed about the walls of the house of marble. Jerusalem is the home of discord.

In my concluding chapter I shall try to describe the exceptional Holy Week and Easter I spent there—exceptional because the Latin and the Greek Easters fell for once on the same day. In that week it seemed as if the religious life of the whole world centered in the Court and Church of the Holy Sepulcher. But the lesson of Galilee was forgotten, and among all the voices uplifted, not one uttered the words that seem breathed by the long slopes and the dreamy waters, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."



THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. THE CEREMONIES AT JERUSALEM



VII

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. THE CEREMONIES AT JERUSALEM

MY first impression in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was that I had suddenly come into a barbaric castle of magic connected with innumerable caves of Aladdin. Amazement sat like a weight upon me as I looked at the strange and glittering mystery. Yes, this must be a castle of magic, and about me were caves of Aladdin—caves lined with silver and gold, and immense jewels unknown to me; caves across which miraculous spiders had spun webs of silver and gold. Stars gleamed in them; footsteps echoed, voices murmured, eery lights twinkled,—almost like miners' lights in the earth's black bowels,—marvelous fabrics shone softly among great pictures, carved wood, marble, bronzes, and gilded ironwork. Fortunes were laid up here in this world of brilliance and gloom. As I paused, it almost seemed to me as if I heard the beat of the picks of the *Nibelungen*. As I looked, the painted faces of saints and virgins, of prophets and martyrs, seemed for a moment to be the

faces of magicians and sorceresses, watching the enchanted victims of desires that were unearthly.

The most wonderful church in Christendom! But was it really a church? And I waited spellbound; and presently a crowd of impressions beset me.

To gain this astounding sanctuary, the church of the five creeds, of the five monasteries, of from twenty to thirty chapels, of the seventy sacred localities, in which the traditional site of Calvary is inclosed with the legendary site of Adam's burial-ground, the place of the Virgin's agony, with the place of the resurrection, I had passed through the narrow, dirty, crowded, and marvelous alleys called streets in Jerusalem, leaving on the left the Greek monastery where the Patriarch Damianos lives, often in fear for his life, had descended between the rows of bazaars dedicated to the wants of the Russian pilgrims, where, amid groves of sacred pictures and forests of gilded and painted candles, the soft-tongued goblin-men were busily fleecing the simple children of the steppes, and had traversed the great quadrangle called the court of the Holy Sepulcher.

In that court, already I had been aware of the tug of something strange, powerful, and almost terrible; I had felt the first eddies of the whirlpool trying to suck me in, and had paused, had almost braced my muscles for resistance.

The courtyard is roughly paved, and has two levels connected by steps, the lower level being flush with the





THE COURT OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER, EASTER MORNING



main entrance of the church, which is on the south side. Much of it dates from the time of the Crusades. It is surrounded by walls and buildings. The façade of the church does not suggest the wonders of the interior. It is brown and gray, with a rugged belfry to the left containing bells, and along the flat top an iron railing. Over the doorway is an arch, with pillars, joining a second arch which is filled up with masonry. Above these are two more arches, with ugly windows. To the right there is a sort of stunted tower, with a cupola covered with lead.

At my first coming into the court I had been unable to notice these details, for humanity seethed within it. A roar of voices went up. The pavement echoed with the ceaseless tramping of feet and the grounding of muskets. The walls flung back exclamations and cries: the whining and shrieking of beggars, the loud calling of sellers determined to compel attention to their wares, the vehement discussions of "those that bought"; and — I had almost said the silence of the Russian pilgrims. For mystic Russia was there, mute at the threshold of Calvary.

All along the steps and about the walls of the court were ranged rows of venders of beads and glass bracelets from Hebron, of mother-of-pearl rosaries, crosses of cedar, cheap necklaces, sacred pictures, sweetmeats, foods, and syrups. Arabs were there, and Syrians; men from the Lebanon, from Damascus, from Hebron;

Bedouins and English clergymen; Egyptians, Americans, Abyssinians, Roman Catholic priests; Russian and Greek priests; Turks, Circassians, Negroes, Kabail, and Copts. Near the church, at the foot of the steps, was a company of Turkish soldiers in shabby uniforms, with muskets and well-filled cartridge-belts, patient, hardy, ready for anything. Beyond them, through the great doorway, at the left of which, on their platform of stone under a white arch, were visible the turbans, dark faces, and *djelabs* of the Moslem gatekeepers, the Russian pilgrims poured, an everflowing river of humanity, to lay out their possessions upon the holy stone of unction. And swiftly, irresistibly, the eddies of the human whirlpool drew me in to the river of Russians, and I found myself bewildered, entranced, and now the prey of a crowd of impressions, within the immense building that at this moment was the core of the heart of the Christian world.

People, multitudes of people, were there adoring. By degrees I realized that. This extraordinary labyrinth of vestibules, sacristies, chapels, shrines, balconies, staircases, alcoves, crypts, and caves in the living rock, was swarming with pilgrims, with hundreds upon hundreds,—I am almost tempted to say with thousands upon thousands,—crossing themselves, bowing, kneeling, kissing, rising, going onward; standing rapt in the illumination cast from jeweled lamps by marble sanctuaries; sleeping in stalls of elaborately carved wood



GETHSEMANE AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES



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beneath glittering ikons; leaning over the gilded rails of balconies far up in niches incrusted with gold and silver; passing like gloomy shadows under vaults of naked stone scarcely revealed by guttering candles, accompanied by hollow echoes; weeping by altars and columns, by footprints in the rock; creeping to gaze through holes into holy darknesses; praying beneath crosses; singing sweetly, surrounded by the immobile figures and the smiling faces of angels; laying out rosaries, pictures, bits of silk, handkerchiefs, bracelets, necklaces, on sacred stones; passing their foreheads, their arms, their hands, to and fro over surfaces worn away by the passionate lips of dead multitudes.

The faces in the pictures no longer seemed to me faces of magicians and sorceresses. I recognized them for what they were. I went to the stone of unction, then back to the marble house, before which stood a dense mass of humanity. The first impression was gone. This was a huge, barbaric, mysterious temple of worship, inclosing a sort of delirium of faith and of love. Yes, I thought of it then as a delirium; but I had not seen the holy fire.

Within the precincts of this temple are included, among many other sacred sites, the places where tradition affirms that our Lord was imprisoned with the two malefactors before the crucifixion; where he was scourged; where he was crowned with the thorns; where the three crosses were set up on Calvary; where

the soldier stood when he pierced the Saviour's side; where Christ's raiment was parted; where his body was laid for its anointing; where he was buried and rose again; where he showed himself to Mary Magdalene; and where he appeared to his mother after the resurrection. All these spots are marked out from the rest of the church, and pilgrims were worshiping at all. And the worship of these countless multitudes, amid the amazing surroundings, produced upon the mind, almost upon the body, after a time, a hypnotic effect.

The stone of unction, the first of the holy places, close to the Moslem guardians, is raised above the pavement, and lies in a setting of red and yellow marble. Above it hang eight white lamps from chains formed by golden crosses, strung together and surmounted with ostrich eggs set in gold and decorated with crosses of red. There are also immense candelabra, and huge candles in carved black candlesticks. To the left, not far off, the stone where the women stood watching is distinguished by a cupola of iron, with more lamps and chandeliers. Beneath a plaque of brass a rent in the rock, above which much of the church is built, is believed to have been made when the earth quaked after the death of Christ. A hole above an altar, close to where the Virgin is supposed to have met her risen son, enables worshipers to touch with a rod the column to which Christ was bound while the soldiers scourged him. Another column indicates where Christ sat when

they placed on his head the crown of thorns. On Calvary has been erected an altar above an aperture cut in a slab of marble through which can be felt the rock where Christ's cross was set up.

Wherever you look in this gorgeous and somber labyrinth, you see some holy place, with pilgrims bowing down before it, crossing themselves, kneeling, pressing their foreheads and their lips against it. They rise, they move on, and vanish into the shadows, going upward, perhaps, to some hidden shrine near the roof, or downward to some sacred stone in the caverns that are part of the church — possibly past the altar of the penitent thief to the place where the Empress Helena discovered the crown of thorns and the three crosses. And instantly their places are taken, and you see the same gestures made, the same postures assumed, by others, who have appeared mysteriously from some winding of the sacred maze.

Before the stone of unction there are often two lines of pilgrims kneeling, men and women of Russia, holding parcels of purchases made in Jerusalem. They cross themselves, kiss the stone, then eagerly open their packets, and bring out their cherished possessions — caps, thin shawls, handkerchiefs, rosaries, pictures, candles. All are laid out on the stone, which is sometimes almost concealed from sight. The shawls and the handkerchiefs are rubbed to and fro over its worn surface. Then the parcels are made up again, are care-

fully tied, and with many crossings and genuflections the pilgrims rise up to continue their long round of the sacred sites. Few of them omit to visit and pray at even one. They are never weary of worship. They seem filled with a holy energy which conquers all bodily weakness. But when the Easter is over, and the last ceremony is finished, death takes its toll of many, and through the dusty or muddy roads of Jerusalem funeral processions pass swiftly, almost at a run, a wild-looking priest striding at the head, and singing Russians following. And in the midst of every procession, raised high on a bier, but not soldered down in a coffin, is the body of a Russian who has fulfilled a dear ambition, and has died in the land of Jesus.

Almost hypnotized that first day, I wandered through the labyrinth, visiting the great rotunda of the sepulcher, the Copts' chapel, the Latin sacristy, the Greek cathedral, once part of a cathedral of Crusaders, with its column marking the center of the world, the chapels of Adam, of the Syrians, of the apparition, of the forty martyrs, of the invention of the cross — visiting, it almost seemed to me, a thousand places where people were kneeling, praying, adoring, and weeping. But again and again the human whirlpool seemed to suck me back to the house of marble, beneath the high, blue dome, which protects a stone set in marble, and a marble altar, lighted by lamps made of silver and gold, and ornamented with jewels. This is the chapel of the Holy







VIA DOLOROSA



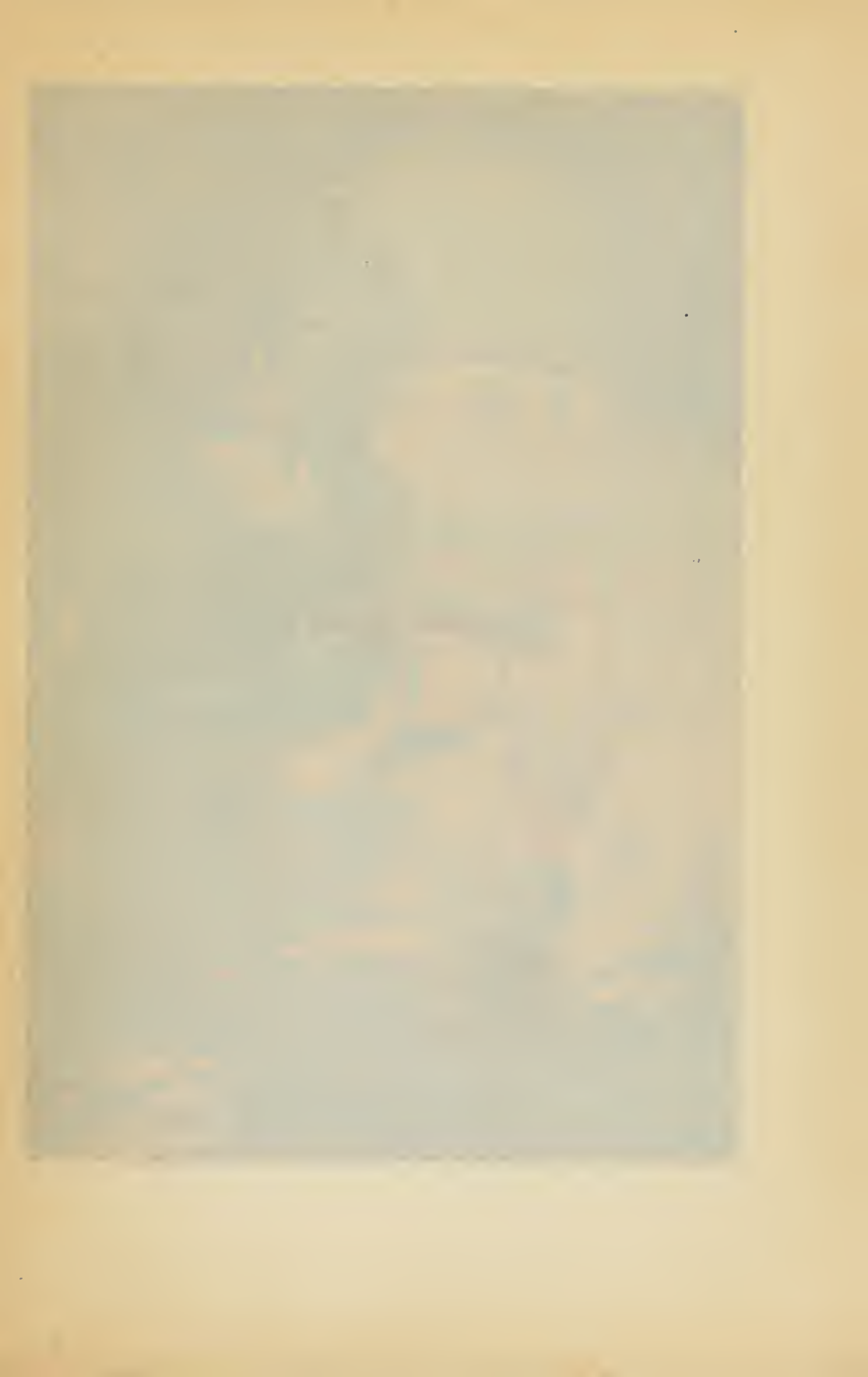
Sepulcher. Tradition states that the stone it contains was rolled away from Christ's tomb by the angel. The altar of marble where mass is said every day covers the place of the tomb. It is there that the so-called miracle of the holy fire is accomplished, and it is there, beneath the figures of angels with clasped hands, that the pilgrims adore most fervently, and make their longest prayers, and nearly all day long sing hymns to their risen Saviour. There indeed is the center of the Christian world at the wonderful time of Easter.

The first ceremony which I saw was the washing of the feet. There followed the burial of Christ, the holy fire, the Abyssinian service on Easter eve, the Greek celebration on the night of Easter, the Easter morning procession, and the Easter Monday service in the wonderful old Armenian Church of St. James. Of these by far the most extraordinary was the holy fire. The one which most touched me, I could scarcely say why, was the Easter morning procession.

The ceremony of the washing of the feet took place in the open air, in the court of the Holy Sepulcher, and I witnessed it from the belfry of the Greek monastery, high above the city and rather too near to the bells. When I had reached my aery, and looked down over the parapet, I had a bird's-eye view of the court, which was crammed with pilgrims, kept back from a platform which stood in the middle by lines of Turkish soldiers. This platform was covered with a gaudy carpet and protected by a green railing, within which were two

benches. On each bench was a row of six cushions. On a dais, gained by a step and carpeted with red and gold, stood a gilt throne, in front of which were placed a great gilt ewer, a gilt tray, and a voluminous white towel. Against a wall of the court opposite to the platform there was a flight of steps, painted green, leading to a small green platform or pulpit. As I glanced toward it, two men ascended to it and nailed to the wall above it a picture of Christ washing the feet of the apostles.

The roar of voices rose up to me. I saw the crowd surging this way and that; Turkish officers in blue and red, some of them wearing frock-coats, moving to and fro watchfully in the clear space before the platform; the soldiers fighting, but good-naturedly, with the people. Nearer to me were masses of gazers, on balconies, and at the windows of houses. One great window space, with red and green shutters and before it a railing, was reserved for the pasha of Jerusalem, and was occupied for the moment by a priest and a soldier. Later the pasha would come, who, as soon as the ceremony is over, has to despatch to Constantinople this telegram, "Past in peace." In the angles formed by the walls of the court were wooden boxes, or cases, slung on ropes, which dangled from projections and railings. And in each of these boxes, from fifteen to twenty feet above the heads of the crowd, sat audacious spectators. Even while I looked at them, in amazement mingled with anxiety, the rope that upheld one of the boxes suddenly



MOSQUE OF OMAR





gave way, and with a shriek the occupants, a woman and two men, crashed down upon the Russians beneath.

In the midst of the uproar that followed this event a solitary priest appeared, wearing the tall black head-gear of the Orthodox Church and a gorgeous red-and-gold vestment, and carrying an immense copy of the Greek Testament bound in gold. With great precaution he crept up into the pulpit beneath the picture of Christ, and in a loud voice began to declaim a passage of Scripture. But almost immediately his voice was drowned by a deafening noise close to me. A great bell in my aery was being struck with a sort of hammer to announce the approach of the procession. Very slowly it came from the church to the platform in the center of the court down a lane kept by the soldiers. Cavasses in blue and gold, carrying long staffs, walked first; then a priest in black, with a tight bouquet of flowers; then a train of boys in red and gold, bearing a silver cross and a mighty candle. They advanced to the platform and paused. The bell stopped. There was a silence broken only by the voice from the pulpit, which continued pitilessly, with strange, nasal inflections like those of a muezzin. One man, the priest in black with the bouquet, had mounted the platform and stood by the throne of the patriarch.

Two or three minutes elapsed. Then a long stream of bishops and priests, headed by an immense gold cross, and wearing black hats, long veils, and red-and-gold

vestments, flowed into the court. The bell raised once more its barbaric voice, and Damianos, the Patriarch, the persecuted, the adored, the man from the Greek isles whom other men of the isles were ready, it was said, to poison if they could only get the opportunity, appeared, looking really magnificent, with an immense and glittering miter on his head, and clad in a robe that was almost the color of magenta and was stiff with raised gold embroideries. With a peculiar, almost feminine grace, he slowly mounted the platform and took his seat on the throne. Twelve bishops sat down on the benches to right and left of him. Beside him, motionless, stood a priest holding a Bible and a staff decorated with ribbons. At the end of each row of bishops stood a dignitary in red and gold of whose rank I am ignorant. Now all rose, the patriarch took the Bible and read a passage, thus forming a duet with the priest in the pulpit, who went on declaiming without a moment's respite. Then all sat down except the patriarch and the priest beside him.

Amid the deep silence of the enormous crowd the patriarch bent his head. The priest removed his miter, then, assisted by another priest, took off his vestments, leaving him standing in a long, gray-blue robe that looked exactly like a shirt. They tied about him a voluminous white apron, and he poured water from the gilded ewer into the gilded dish. While he had been prepared for his curious task, the twelve bishops, who



EASTER PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM





represented the twelve apostles, had bared their twelve right feet, and now Damianos, in a thoroughly business-like way, went from one to the other. Before each one he knelt on one knee, took the bare foot, washed it with water, vigorously dried it with the towel, then rose, allowed the washed bishop to kiss his hand, and in return kissed him on the cheek. This little formality accomplished, Damianos passed on, while the bishop, as if in a hurry, put on his stocking and his substantial black boot. Up and down the two lines the priest holding the bouquet followed the patriarch. When all the bishops were duly washed, the apron was taken off, the miter and vestments were donned, and the bishops came one by one, stood before the throne, bent, and spoke into the patriarch's ear. He bowed, leaned forward, replied, then descended from the platform, stood in front of the crowd, and read a passage of Scripture from a big Bible. While he was doing this, from beyond the surrounding buildings there floated into the court a loud noise of military music. Soldiers were marching to St. Stephen's Gate to meet the Mohammedan procession on the way to the Tomb of Moses and clear a passage for it through the Mohammedan crowd. The shrill shriek of the Turkish march had not died away when the foot-washing was over, and Damianos and his clergy were passing through the narrow alley between the candle bazaars on their way to the Greek monastery. Damianos now held the tight bou-

quet, dipped it from time to time in holy water, and sprinkled the crowd. As I stood in a doorway he threw some drops upon me, smiling gently, and murmuring in Greek, "I wish you a happy Easter."

Immediately after the procession had entered the monastery, His Beatitude was good enough to receive me in private. I was shown into a fine reception-room containing a throne and some sofas and chairs. After I had waited ten minutes, Damianos entered, accompanied by a young priest with long auburn hair and beard, who acts as his secretary and interpreter. He received me with smiling cordiality, sat down on an ordinary chair opposite to me, leaned forward, and talked to me in Greek. Everything he said was translated into excellent English by his secretary.

I looked at this man, who has been, and possibly still is, in a difficult position, with an interest that I did not try to conceal. He is large, bulky, yet somehow elegant and graceful; imposing, with fine features and eyes, and the manners of a prince of the Church; easy and absolutely self-possessed. People in Jerusalem said he was honest and good, but not strong enough to rule his turbulent and often self-seeking priests. When I was in Palestine he lived in fear of being poisoned by them, it was said, and ate only food prepared by his personal servant.

Our conversation ran on my travels, on England and English life, and on the ceremonies and functions of

Holy Week and Easter. After taking coffee, and jam served with a glass of water, I got up to say good-by; but His Beatitude stopped me.

"Wait a moment. Are you going to the Holy Fire?"

I said that I was, and had taken a place high up in a balcony.

"I will give you a special card," said Damianos. He sent the young priest for one of his visiting-cards, wrote some words on it, and gave it to me. "That will insure you a place in front of the Holy Sepulcher."

I thanked him warmly, and took my departure.

The card of Damianos was nearly to prove my undoing. Almost the whole of Good Friday I passed in the Church of the Sepulcher. I was there by eight in the morning, and I was there very late in the night. Already at eight the church swarmed with Russian pilgrims, who were encamped about the holy places in readiness for the miracle of the morrow. Throughout the whole of Friday night they remained in their places, some of them sleeping in upright positions, others reclining on the pavement with their heads supported on bundles, others again crouched in doorways, on the floors of balconies, or against cavern walls. Many were merely black humps and mounds in the dense obscurity. But the flickering light from the hundreds of hanging-lamps fell on the seamed faces and mystic eyes of many more, on knotted hands patiently folded over staffs, which made me think of the words, "Thy rod and thy

staff they comfort me," on lips moving in prayer through the livelong night. And among these crowds was the pale effigy of Jesus nailed to the cross, borne by the Franciscans to the stone of unction, laid thereon, prayed over, anointed, borne on amid the wailing of many voices and the falling of many tears, to be hidden in the perfumed sepulcher. That night, despite the crowds in the sacred building, it seemed a wonderful and hushed sanctuary, where the living might dream in the soft radiance of lamps that looked like jewels, and the dead might profoundly sleep amid the profound shadows. With the morning came a vehement change.

I started early, and as I made my way through the narrow streets, accompanied by Mr. David Jamal, and holding tightly the card of Damianos, I realized that the city was in a turmoil of expectation. The crowds in the alleys were enormous, and when we presently turned to the right, to descend into the court of the Holy Sepulcher, I heard below me that extraordinary, that terribly vital sound, the roaring voice of a mob irresponsible with excitement. Almost like leaves whirled along by rushing waters we were taken and swept down into the court, where a squad of Turkish soldiers was keeping a way free to the entrance of the church against a throng of fiercely turbulent Christians, frantic with the desire to join the thousands of people who already crammed the rotunda. Just as we were nearing this narrow, open space, the soldiers, apparently angered by





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THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER AT EASTER



the incessant struggling of the crowd, formed up in line right across the court, and with lifted muskets advanced, pressing every one roughly back. Not for some minutes would they allow the unfortunate ticket-holders to pass, but treated us all alike as brawling malcontents. In vain I thrust my large, white card, bearing the patriarch's name, under the scowling brown faces. Shouting words I could not understand, they only drove me back, and I was beginning to despair of getting into the church at all when, why I know not, there was a sudden lull, in which Mr. Jamal attracted the attention of a Greek priest and a Turkish officer. In an instant my card was examined, and I was free to walk with such dignity as my disordered condition would permit between the lines of soldiers into the great church from which, as I neared it, came a roar of voices to join the cries without.

Inside the church there were twelve hundred soldiers well armed to keep us in order; but for a time I thought it doubtful whether they would succeed. For the crowd, composed of Syrians, Copts, Armenians, Greeks, Russians, and Abyssinians, was already in a state of almost furious excitement. Wherever one looked, there was a sea of vivid, staring faces, with eyes aflame and shouting mouths; of gesticulating arms and hands; of pushing, struggling bodies. To and fro in the space kept free before the door of the marble house Turkish officers went calmly and Greek priests anxiously. Tour-

ists of many nations, flushed and nervous, sardonic, cynical, amused, touched, alarmed, or merely interested, hurried to their places convoyed by the cavasses of their respective consuls. And I, not without considerable satisfaction, greeted the patriarch's auburn-haired secretary, and took my stand at the very door of the Holy Sepulcher. Here I was surrounded by soldiers, and for the moment had plenty of room.

The crowd surged to and fro, as if infected by an ungovernable impulse to change its place. It swayed against the double lines of soldiers with a wavelike motion, was repelled, and swayed monotonously back. Shouts and yells broke from it. Here and there I saw a man, who had been thrust up on to the shoulders of his fellows, scrambling about like one on a moving floor. There were multitudes of women present, many of them draped in shawls of various colors and holding mysterious bundles. And it seemed to me that every one of these thousands carried a big packet of candles, to be lighted later at the sacred fire. Boys bearing bottles of water drew attention to the fact by loud cries, and presently there appeared a number of youths holding trays heaped with cakes and flat loaves of bread.

Then I realized the hunger, physical as well as spiritual (?), of this yelling mob. A roar arose when the cakes and loaves were perceived. Hundreds of hands were stretched out frantically toward them. Between the pillars of the round church had been put up rough boxes





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ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER



of uncovered wood to accommodate spectators. From these boxes also came famished cries, and from them greedy hands were stretched down toward the food. Now, what money transactions passed I know not; but the would-be sellers, unable to make their way into the crowd, passed or threw the cakes and loaves to the clamorers, and flung them upward to the people in the boxes. For a minute the air was full of flying food. Then the trays were empty, and the sellers mysteriously disappeared.

Meanwhile my satisfaction at my prominent position was dying in anxiety. More and more people were let in beyond the lines of the soldiers. The crowd behind them, too, seemed to be encroaching. To the left there suddenly broke out violent fighting, among the Armenians, I was told. A lady near me fainted. I was pulled, trodden on. I began to long for my place in that gilded balcony far above me where I saw Mr. Guérin calmly surveying the fierce discomfort below. With every moment the crush increased till it became alarming, and at last Mr. Jamal said we must try to get away. But how? And where? It was too late now to gain the balcony. In a very few minutes the patriarch would enter. The fighting grew fiercer. Mr. Jamal disappeared. With a good deal of difficulty I stuck to my post by the Holy Sepulcher. But the heat and the pressure were almost unbearable. Suddenly a hand grasped my arm; I was pulled forward. I struggled with all my might, found myself at the foot of a ladder,

scrambled up it, and was above the tumult in one of the wooden boxes between the pillars, and immediately below the tiers of balconies which surround the church. Mr. Jamal took his stand on the ladder, to keep the door, as it were, and there he remained during the whole of the succeeding ceremony.

Though in what seemed a very precarious situation, perched on thin planks roughly nailed together, full of holes and upheld by frail wooden supports, I was now able to get a splendid bird's-eye view of the extraordinary scene about the sepulcher. I looked right down into the crowd, and was close to it. One of the round holes in the wall of the marble house through which the holy fire is thrust was almost exactly in front of me. Near it stood a Greek priest holding a whip. Two or three other priests holding whips were close by.

The crowd had now begun to shout in chorus. First in Arabic they shouted:

> O Jews, O Jews, your feast is that of the devils;
> Ours is that of Christ!
> And Christ has redeemed us.
> With his blood he has bought us.
> Therefore to-day we are happy,
> And you, O Jews, are sad.

Then those of the Syrian pilgrims who had come from a distance shouted:

> O St. George,
> We have come to pray at the sepulcher!
> We, we are the Christians
> With candles in our hands.

Many, as they lifted their voices, lifted also bare arms in wild gesticulations. On all sides I saw frantic hands grasping bundles of candles, holding them pointed toward the sepulcher, and waving them to and fro. I looked down upon what seemed a vast crowd of demented people, who had thrown off every scrap of self-restraint, whose strange passions went naked for all to see, who were full of barbarous violence, savage expectation, and the blood-lust. As I watched them I thought of a pack of hounds leaping up to the fox that the huntsman is about to throw to them. Yet these people, in all the colors of the rainbow, and drawn from all parts of Syria and other lands, wanted only — to light their candles!

The question that all travelers ask in Jerusalem is: "Do these crowds believe that what happens inside the Holy Sepulcher is a miracle? Do they believe that, as on the day of Pentecost, fire descends from heaven direct to the Greek patriarch who has entered the Chapel of the Angels with the Armenian patriarch? Or do they understand that the ceremony is merely emblematic, that the patriarchs do not pretend that it is anything else?"

Having watched the people on this extraordinary occasion at close quarters, I am unable to doubt that hundreds, probably thousands, of them do believe they are assisting at a miracle. I cannot otherwise account for their frantic excitement, an excitement such as I

have never seen in any other crowd not intent on violence or slaughter. After the working of the "miracle," delirium is the only word that accurately expresses the condition of the multitudes.

But now suddenly there was a diminishing of the uproar. The patriarch had entered the Chapel of the Angels. Just in front of me, by the round hole in the wall of the marble house, stood a Greek priest in gorgeous vestments, holding a bundle of candles and a handkerchief. Another priest in black leaned against the marble with his right arm thrust through the hole. Near him, but above him, was a man holding with his right hand one end of a long handkerchief which this priest grasped with his left hand.

The noise of the multitude gradually decreased, till there was a sort of hush that was almost ghastly. Thousands of faces stared toward the sepulcher. Thousands of arms stretched out toward it. And now the hands holding the candles were like praying hands, supplicating the holy fire to come to them.

It came at last. With a fierce gesture, as of savage exultation, the long-haired priest withdrew his arm from the hole and held up a great bunch of flaming candles. As he did so he dropped his end of the handkerchief, and the man above the crowd furiously waved it toward the Greek cathedral. And then delirium seized the close-packed thousands. All the mouths opened to let out yells, shrieks, and the wild twittering of women. All the arms ges-

ticulated with frenzy toward the smoky, yellow flames. All the bodies struggled desperately, cruelly, to get to them. And the priest dipped his torch, and suddenly fire began to rush through the great church. The patriarch — yes, the graceful and dignified Damianos — tore out of the Holy Sepulcher, and fell in the Greek cathedral with the fire in his hands. The priest in vestments who had been standing in front of me, darted away to the balconies, brandishing two bunches of candles. By the staircases inside the marble house priests gained its roof and lighted the lamps above it. From the balconies near the blue, star-spangled dome, masses of candles were let down by long cords, were lighted by priests below, and were drawn up flaming. Fire encircled the rotunda, three tiers of fire. Fire rushed into every recess of this temple of worship and frenzy, up to its roof, and down to its most remote cave of the rock. The light of day was literally blotted out by the glare of the fire, as the desperately struggling multitudes sent it on from hand to hand. All the thousands of faces were lit up by a yellow glare. Above the contending bodies rose wreaths of smoke. A heat that felt unnatural and dangerous began to invade the sanctuary, growing stronger with every moment. The roar of voices sounded menacing. Always above it rose the wild twittering of the women. And still the serpents of flame grew longer, winding, winding over the thousands of heads as more and more candles fed greedily at the

sacred fire. Beneath me a woman's bundle caught fire, and was extinguished; a shawl flared up, and was put out by the pressure of the crowd. The real miracle seemed to be that the whole assemblage of fanatics, utterly careless, almost devilishly indifferent in their frenzy, was not involved in one vast conflagration. Beneath my feet the thin boards on which I stood grew hot. The pilgrims immediately below had lighted their bunches of candles, were waving them, were thrusting them upward till the flames came through the holes in the wood and played about our feet. We stamped, knocked, bent, shouted down to them. Our voices were drowned in the uproar.

And now, impossible though it seemed, the tumult grew even more violent. The soldiers were clearing a space between the people all about the sepulcher. The procession was coming—the Greeks, the Armenians, the Copts, the Syrians, the Abyssinians. That procession through the glare, the smoke, the roaring, and the struggling, was, I think, the most picturesque, the most extraordinary thing I have ever seen. Impossible to describe it in detail! Details at such a moment are swallowed up. It may have been, doubtless it was, carefully ordered. The effect was of a superb, barbaric, and wholly irreligious tumult, in which gyrated, almost dervishlike, in a sea of fire, beneath hundreds of hanging-lamps and bars and chains of gold and stars in a blue vault, the bishops and priests of the different relig-

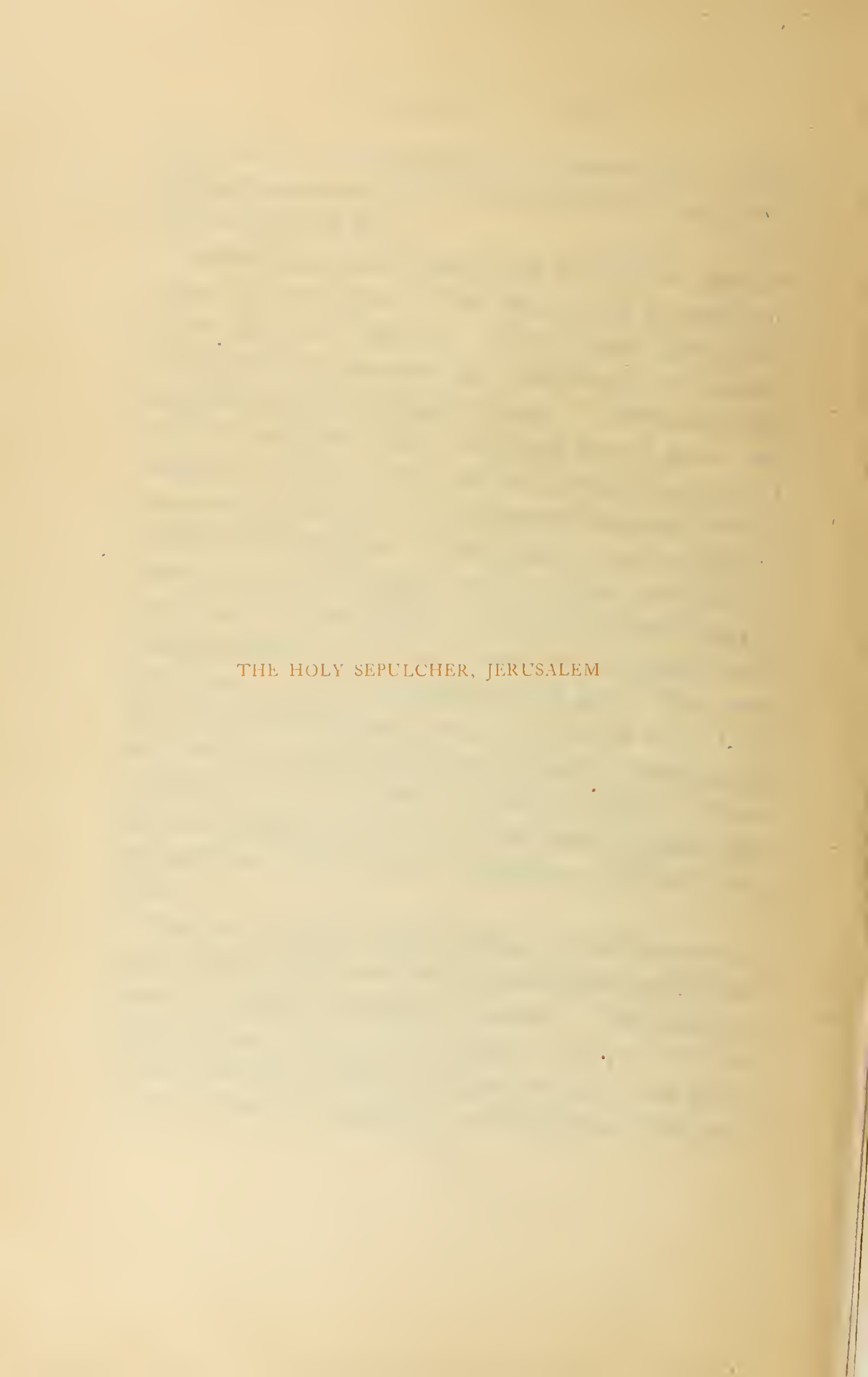
ions of Christ, the Prince of Peace, accompanied by soldiers, by acolytes, by banner-bearers, by cavasses beating the floor with their staves. Priests shouted for silence, and a great roar was their answer. Then hymns were bellowed in antiphony to the accompaniment of myriads of clapping hands. In red and green and yellow the Russian cavasses went by. Lines of men formed, lifting up gorgeous banners of blue and gold and red and purple, with sacred pictures worked in the centers. Behind them were the soldiers with lifted muskets; behind the soldiers, thousands of flaming torches shaken by tireless hands. And down the avenue of banners and muskets and torches came bearded and long-haired men in magnificent vestments, stiff with silver and gold embroideries, and gleaming with jewels, with miters on their heads, and candles in their hands, on which shone heavy rings. On their breasts were crosses. But who thought of the cross whose arms have stretched across the world? And the Patriarch Damianos came, weary under his huge white and gold head-dress; and the gorgeous Armenians, almost like moving idols, clad in the jewels from their wonderful treasury; and the withered-looking Copts; and the astounding Abyssinians, in magenta, with partly shaved heads and great tufts of coarse hair, like the gaudy puppets that people a nightmare. With the Armenians came fierce and crafty-faced youths, throwing up their heads and shrieking wild hymns as they stared

about them with shining and fanatical eyes. The Abyssinians moved with a sort of dancing step, shaking their tufts of hair.

And the procession passed and was hidden, was lost to my sight in a glare of fire and a murk of smoke on the far side of the sepulcher. When it came again, I noticed that the Copts wore tall head-dresses of magenta and gold, adorned with gold crosses. Their bishop was in white and gold, with a miter, and bore a great staff surmounted with a cross, and also carried a small gold cross in his right hand. A large gold cross was carried in front of the Syrians. Then came a man swinging a silver censer and wearing a robe of yellow and red embroidered with red flowers. Other Syrians followed, wearing loose gowns of red, yellow, blue, and green, and white and gold hoods bordered with pink. One man was robed in white and green, with a white cap. One in royal blue and gold went bare-headed. Many of the Armenians had on miters of black and gold. Their patriarch, who held a cross and staff, was crowned with an immense miter with an embroidered picture on the front.

Numbers of men in shirt-sleeves, or with bare arms, had now forced their way into the procession, and walked with it, frantically waving their candles. The confusion became greater with every moment. The heat was almost unbearable, and the mounting smoke, which hung in veils above the sepulcher, made the eyes blink and





THE HOLY SEPULCHER, JERUSALEM



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tingle till it was difficult to see. But the fierce roaring of hymns still almost deafened the ears, accompanied by the rhythmical clapping of myriads of hands. And always the acute voices of women dominated the tumult, seemed to float upward with the smoke above the multitudes of lamps, above the yellow glare of the pervading fire, above the rings of flame that marked the balconies, to the stars in the blue dome. The weary Damianos fell out from the ranks with his bishops and priests. But still the Armenians, blazing with immense jewels, circled the sepulcher, attended by the youths with the fierce faces and the watchful eyes. And the Syrians came in their many colors, and the Copts with their purple banners. And still the Abyssinians went shrieking by with their lithe dancing step, opening and shutting their thin dark hands, as if they were feeling for the silver clappers with which, on the eve of Easter, in their savage pavilion, they celebrate the glory of the risen Christ of the dark men.

At last through the tumult there came the sound of a bell. And presently, how I never knew rightly, we were out under the sky, with the dream of fire behind us, and the voices dying from our ears.

And then, after the wonderful midnight mass on the eve of Easter, when at twelve o'clock bells sounded within the church, and, as each one of the thousands assembled lighted his candle, the cry went up, "Christ

is risen!" came the Easter morning ceremony in the court of the Holy Sepulcher.

Ah, how gentle, how tender, how touching, how vital it was, that simple greeting of the wonderful morning after the delirium and the fury of the holy fire! All hearts were excited to frenzy by the holy fire. The Easter morning procession moved hundreds to tears, held them tensely silent. Instead of the blue dome, spangled with artificial stars, a faint blue sky was over our heads. Instead of the glare of the torches, the sunbeams fell mildly upon us. Instead of the yelling multitudes, we heard the sound of the wonderful bells. They began to peal forth just before the procession entered the court from the city. By the door of the church the Abyssinians, in white and black, were already waiting. And the bells, one deep and booming, the others lighter in timbre, were harsh and very barbaric, but thrilling and full of meaning — bells never to be forgotten. They sounded like strange, like emotional voices of living things, proclaiming a great, a superb truth. Down below me I saw tears streaming over the seamed faces of many Russians as they signed themselves, kissed one another, told one another, "Christ is risen!" answering to the triumphant proclamation of the bells, which, unwearied, reiterated their marvelous message to the children of men. And the cavasses in blue and red and gold came slowly into the court, and a man carrying the

cross, and boys in red and in gold with swinging lamps on chains, and many priests in black. And there followed a priest with his arms full of flowers, and behind him another bearing on high the risen Christ crowned with a halo of gold, and framed in a glory of blossoms. Then there rose from the thousands of pilgrims a cry of sweet exultation, and the bells seemed to grow louder as they told Jerusalem that the marble house was empty, that the stone had been rolled away. The bishops appeared in pale yellow, pearl color, and gold, all holding lighted candles. And last of all came Damianos, bearing a staff and a jeweled picture of the risen Christ. The procession stopped. The bells were silent. There was a pause. Then the patriarch took a step forward, gazed at the immense crowd of adoring pilgrims, lifted the jeweled picture of Christ, held it out toward them and said, "Christ is risen!"

As his voice died away, the priest with the flowers raised his arms and showered blossoms over the crowd; the bells pealed forth again; the procession moved on; and the pilgrims, eagerly lighting their candles and embracing one another, closed in behind, crying, "Christ is risen! Christ is risen!"

And so into the darkness of the great church, quietly, softly, the procession gradually vanished. The gloom was lit up by the candles of priests and pilgrims. Through the doorway I saw Damianos in his gorgeous

vestments sink humbly down to kiss the stone of unction. Then the Russians, weeping with joy, moved forward and hid him from my sight.

The crowds melted away; but the bells never ceased proclaiming their message. It was as if they knew that their voices were destined not only to tell to Jerusalem, but to all the world that lay beyond the confines of the city of Jesus, the truth of the resurrection—"Christ is risen! Christ is risen from the dead!"





